

INSPECTION CHECK: Clean Air Force Partner Program

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIN

For Station Owners, Managers, and Inspectors



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	
- <u>Letter of Explanation</u>	3
- <u>About Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF)</u>	4
CUSTOMER SERVICE OVERVIEW	
- Customer Service Issues & Trends	6
- Customer Service Best Practices	7
BUSINESS OPERATIONS BEST PRACTICES	
- Motorist Service Tips	8
- <u>Testing Tips</u>	10
- What Should I Do If My Vehicle Fails Its Emissions Test?	13
······································	
PROGRAM RESOURCES	
- GCAF Resources For Station Assistance	14
- How to Obtain Materials	16
- <u>Program Resource Reminders</u>	17
<u> 170gram Nesource Neminaers</u>	
MEDIA O MADICETINO TIDO	
MEDIA & MARKETING TIPS	10
- <u>Speaking With The Press</u>	18
- <u>Social Media Tips & Resources</u>	19
HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR PARTICIPATION	22

Dear Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF) Station Owner, Manager, or Inspector,

Since 1996, emissions inspection stations like yours have played a vital role in improving air quality across Georgia. Together, we've identified and repaired more than 4.7 million high-polluting vehicles, helping to reduce harmful emissions and protect public health. Your dedication has made a real difference—and we thank you for helping Georgia breathe a little easier.

GCAF is excited to relaunch an updated Inspection Check: Clean Air Force Partner Program as part of our ongoing commitment to good customer service and clean air. This initiative is designed to promote excellent customer service in emissions testing stations while giving you tools to build trust and grow your business.

We've created this revamped customer service toolkit, featuring:

- Clear customer service best practices
- Communication tips for testing and repair discussions
- Digital promotional tools and a participation opportunity

These customer service practices are easy to implement—and they go a long way in building customer loyalty, encouraging positive reviews, and creating a better experience for every motorist.

What You Need to Do

- Review this entire customer service toolkit.
- 2 Complete the short Acknowledgement Form (<u>view the form here</u>) to confirm your participation.
- 3 Take advantage of promotional opportunities.

Once your form is submitted, you'll receive access and details, including:

- A digital portal with logos, QR code signage, and promotional materials
- A digital badge to display your commitment to service excellence

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us at info@cleanairforce.com. Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely, Georgia's Clean Air Force



ABOUT GCAF





WHY DOES GEORGIA HAVE AN EMISSIONS TESTING PROGRAM?

Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF) was created in 1996 to help the state meet federal air quality standards outlined in the Clean Air Act. In partnership with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), GCAF manages the state's Vehicle Emissions Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program, which targets 13 metro Atlanta counties previously designated as ozone non-attainment areas.

RISKS TO OUR HEALTH >>> The program exists because vehicle emissions are a major source of air pollution in metro Atlanta. Unlike stationary sources such as factories, mobile sources like gasoline-powered cars and light-duty trucks are constantly moving and harder to regulate—yet they significantly impact the air we breathe.

Air pollution has serious health, environmental, and economic consequences. Breathing polluted air can trigger asthma attacks, worsen heart and lung conditions, and affect vulnerable populations like children and the elderly. Certain pollutants are even linked to cancer, birth defects, and neurological damage. Air pollution also harms our environment—damaging crops, forests, waterways, and wildlife—and contributes to costly losses in agriculture and productivity.



ABOUT GCAF







HOW DOES GCAF HELP?

GCAF identifies high-polluting vehicles through emissions testing and helps ensure they are repaired. Since the program began:

- Over 4.7 million* high-polluting vehicles have been identified and repaired
- More than 2.2 million tons* of harmful pollutants have been removed from Georgia's air
- Atlanta's air quality has improved significantly, with fewer "unhealthy air" days

In fact, Georgia has achieved important milestones:

- The state is now in attainment for ozone and fine particle pollution under EPA standards.
- Each year, GCAF tests approximately 3.2 million vehicles.

THE WORK ISN'T FINISHED >>> While the progress is real, maintaining clean air requires ongoing effort. The EPA recently strengthened its standards for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), and Georgia must stay vigilant to remain in attainment.

By helping drivers identify and repair polluting vehicles, GCAF inspectors and stations play a direct role in protecting public health and the environment. Thank you for being a vital part of this mission.

^{*}Per data from March 2025



CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES & TRENDS

WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

Excellent customer service isn't just appreciated—it's expected. With more options and higher expectations, today's customers look for fast, friendly, and reliable support. A single interaction can build loyalty or damage a business's reputation.



According to HubSpot Research, 93% of customers are more likely to become repeat buyers when they receive great service.

Customers who have a positive service experience are 38% more likely to recommend a business, compared to those who don't. (Source: Qualtrics)

For emissions inspection stations, the way you greet, help, and communicate with motorists is just as important as how you perform the test. Excellent service helps reduce confusion, builds trust, and encourages repeat visits.

TOP CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLAINTS FROM MOTORISTS

Long Wait Times

 Extended waits for assistance or checkout remain one of the biggest frustrations for customers.

Unhelpful or Understaffed Locations

• A lack of support—or unclear communication—can make customers feel ignored or confused.

Errors in Service

 In emissions testing, a common complaint involves data entry mistakes that prevent accurate test results from being reflected during registration.

By staying aware of customer service trends and common complaints—and putting practical policies into action—you can enhance the customer experience, reduce issues, and build positive word-of-mouth for your station.



CUSTOMER SERVICE BEST PRACTICES

Providing exceptional customer service is crucial for the success of any business, including emissions inspection shops in Georgia.

- **Warm Welcome**: Greet each customer promptly with a friendly demeanor to set a positive tone for the service experience.
- 2 **Clear Communication**: In simple terms, explain the emissions testing process, expected wait times, and any necessary preparations to ensure customers are well-informed.
- **Efficient Service**: Respect the customer's time. Strive to perform inspections promptly while maintaining accuracy.
- 4 **Comfortable Waiting Area**: Maintain a clean, comfortable, and well-lit waiting area with amenities like seating, reading materials, and refreshments.
- **Transparent Pricing**: To earn trust, clearly display service fees and provide detailed explanations of any additional costs.
- **Professional Staff**: Ensure all employees are trained, courteous, and dressed appropriately to reflect the professionalism of your business.
- 7 **Feedback Encouragement**: Demonstrate that you value input. Invite customers to share their experiences and suggestions.
- **Problem Resolution**: Address any customer complaints or issues promptly and empathetically, aiming for satisfactory resolutions.
- **Follow-Up**: Consider reaching out after the service to thank customers and remind them of future inspection dates to foster long-term relationships.
- **Stay Updated**: Provide accurate information to customers. Regularly update your knowledge of Georgia's emissions regulations to ensure compliance.

Using these strategies can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, contributing to the success of your emissions inspection shop.





MOTORIST SERVICE TIPS

Using best practices during emissions testing can improve motorists' perception of your employees, your station, and the program. A positive experience will encourage motorists to return to your station and to tell their friends to use your services.

FOR STATION OWNERS & MANAGERS

Follow these simple guidelines to achieve customer service excellence.

- Make a commitment to deliver the highest quality service to every motorist every time.
- Set a solid example for your employees by providing outstanding customer service.
- Strive to make your employees/inspectors satisfied with their jobs. This leads to pride in work, employee retention, and better customer service.
- Provide customer-facing employees with detailed, easily accessible information so they can answer a wide range of questions from motorists.
- Make sure your station is prepared and ready for testing. Refer to the Station Audit Checklist.
- Develop a friendly approach for each motorist interaction. Consider using a standardized greeting like, "Welcome to [name of station], I'm [your name], how can I help you today?"
- If a motorist does not speak English, provide him or her with an applicable GCAF information sheet translated into Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, or Mandarin Chinese (<u>find these on the</u> <u>GCAF website</u>). Note also that the GCAF Hotline offers assistance for Spanish-speaking motorists.
- Refer motorists to program resources like The GCAF Hotline (800.449.2471), the GCAF website (www.cleanairforce.com), and email (info@cleanairforce.com) for additional assistance.



- Evaluate your station's performance through the use of GCAF comment cards (<u>available</u> on the GCAF website in English and Spanish), or attached to the GCAF Q&A brochure). Or create your own brief customer service survey and offer incentives for customers to complete it.
- Review comments from customers to understand their expectations, preferences, and level of satisfaction. Address negative comments regarding employees quickly. Likewise, compliment and recognize inspectors for doing a good job. Change processes to improve areas rated as unsatisfactory by customers.

FOR STATION INSPECTORS

Follow these simple guidelines to achieve customer service excellence.

- Make a commitment to deliver the highest quality service to every motorist every time.
- Employ a friendly approach for each motorist interaction. Use a greeting like, "Welcome to [name of station], I'm [your name], how can I help you today?"
- If a motorist does not speak English, provide him or her with an applicable GCAF information sheet translated into Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, or Mandarin Chinese (<u>find these on the GCAF website</u>). Note also that the GCAF Hotline offers assistance for Spanish-speaking motorists.
- Refer motorists to program resources such as the GCAF Q&A brochure, the GCAF Hotline (800.449.2471), the GCAF website (www.cleanairforce.com), and email (info@cleanairforce.com) for additional assistance. Note also that the GCAF website provides live chat assistance.



TESTING TIPS

MOTORIST WAIT TIME

While this toolkit offers ways to reduce wait times, some delays are unavoidable. Here are a few ways to improve the motorist's experience while he or she is waiting.

- Manage expectations. Explain how long the test will take.
- Clearly state the anticipated wait time.
- Attempt to be accurate in estimating the wait time.
- Mention times when the facility is likely to be less busy.
- Post a sign (digital or manual) with an approximate wait time based on the number of vehicles in line. Update the information as wait times change.
- Always be courteous. A motorist may ask questions about the vehicle's condition, why an
 inspection is taking longer than expected, etc. If you can't provide an adequate answer, refer
 the motorist to a manager or station owner.
- Allow motorists to observe their vehicles being inspected from a safe viewing area. This will
 give them added peace of mind and build their trust in your station and the inspection team.



ENHANCED WAITING AREAS

The ambience of the waiting area can make a big difference in how motorists perceive their time waiting for an emissions test. Consider providing the following, if possible:

- Comfortable seating, such as padded chairs or benches
- Vending machines for snacks and drinks, or free beverages such as coffee and tea or a water fountain
- Current reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, or brochures about the other services your business provides
- A television, computer connected to the internet (limited to appropriate websites), or free Wi-Fi so waiting motorists can check email, surf the web, etc.
- Attractive holders for GCAF Q&A brochures and business cards



DECREASING MOTORIST WAIT TIMES

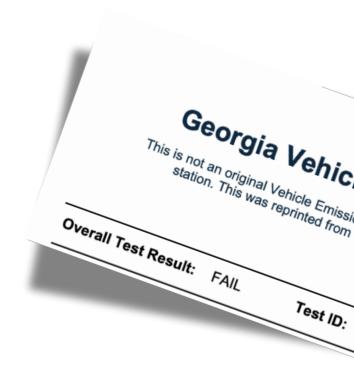
- Allow adequate time to warm up the analyzer(s) prior to the station's posted open time.
- Verify that the station's Wi-Fi/internet connection is working before beginning testing for the day.
- Ensure an adequate supply of analyzer certificates (E-Certs) in their inventory. If inventory is low, order more via the GCAF Dashboard at www.gadashboard.com.
- Make sure equipment is functioning correctly and is serviced on schedule and as needed.
- Have as many employees as possible become certified emissions inspectors to ensure your station runs efficiently, even when short-staffed.
- Ensure that stations are staffed appropriately during peak hours.
- Inspectors should inspect the vehicle correctly the first time to prevent having to retest the vehicle.
 Ensure correct vehicle information, including the vehicle identification number (VIN), correct test type, etc., is entered and/or selected.
- Make sure the finger vein reader is clean. Encourage inspectors to keep their hands clean with easily accessible hand-cleaning supplies.
- Have equipment manuals and repair technician phone numbers readily available to minimize equipment/station downtime in case of test equipment failure.
 - If your station cannot perform an emissions test, post a "closed" sign.
- Keep Georgia Analyzer System (GAS) messages on file and reference them frequently for critical program information, reminders, and testing tips.
 - Sign up for e-mail receipt of GAS messages by sending a request to info@cleanairforce.com.
- Stations should have the following materials on hand:.
 - Adequate printer supplies such as paper, printer ink/cartridge, etc.
 - GCAF educational material, such as Q&A brochures/business cards, and a prominently displayed
 Motorists' Rights poster
- To prevent equipment failures and station closures, perform regular maintenance checks on your testing equipment.



ASSISTANCE FOR MOTORISTS WITH FAILED EMISSIONS TESTS

If a motorist's vehicle does not pass the test, try these best customer service practices.

- Show the motorist the failing areas on the vehicle inspection report (VIR).
- If you are a test-only station, do not give specific repair recommendations.
- If you are a repair facility and the motorist asks, provide an open and honest assessment of the possible cost of repairs if you can determine it. Explain that a diagnosis and estimate are not included in the emissions test fee. However, you may want to point out that the free retest (at the same station within 30 days) is included in the emissions test fee.
- Remember that a number of conditions may affect a vehicle's test results (for example, a vehicle
 may fail at one station but pass at another). Inspectors should never comment on tests performed
 at other stations.
- Refer motorists to the GCAF website (www.cleanairforce.com) or hotline (800.449.2471) for additional information or assistance.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR VEHICLE FAILS ITS EMISSIONS INSPECTION?



Check for warranties, recalls, and technical service bulletins regarding the emissions control system.



Ask the mechanic to complete the Emissions Repair Form after repairs are complete.



Have a diagnostic analysis performed on the vehicle.



Take the Emissions Repair Form to the original inspection station for a free retest within 30 days of the original test.



Choose a reputable repair facility.



If your vehicle fails the retest, additional repairs and retesting may be required.



If you fail your emissions test, you will receive one free retest if you return to the original inspection station within 30 calendar days of your initial inspection. Thirty (30) days includes your date and time of initial inspection.



No re-inspection, whether paid or unpaid, will be performed until the vehicle has been repaired and the Emissions Repair Form has been completed.

YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR A REPAIR WAIVER FOR THE REGISTRATION YEAR IF YOU MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:



The costs for emissions-related repairs must meet or exceed the annual spend requirement (see online). This amount is adjusted annually to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index.



The retested vehicle must show some improvement in all the areas it did not pass in the initial test.



The retested vehicle must still pass the areas it passed in the initial test.



If a motorist fails his or her annual emissions inspection, it is recommended they have all related taxes and fees ready, and visit their local county tag office for information about a possible non-renewable 30-day extension on your registration, per OCGA 40-2-20.

For additional tips, visit https://cleanairforce.com/motorists/after-you-test for FAQs and more.

PF

PROGRAM RESOURCES FOR STATION ASSISTANCE



Hotline

Call 800.449.2471 and select option #2.



Website | www.cleanairforce.com

- Station and inspector applications
- Station and inspector contact information update forms
- Inspector training calendar
- Blank Emissions Repair Forms
- Inspector training materials
- Georgia Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) summaries
- Waiver, Extension, and Exemption information and forms
- Emissions testing information in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese
- Station resources such as the <u>Station Personnel Quick Guide To The Dashboard</u>, <u>auditing information</u>, <u>current program rules</u>, and more



GCAF Dashboard

Visit the GCAF Dashboard, located at <u>www.gadashboard.com</u>, to purchase E-Certs, complete station certification and recertification applications, review testing histories, view audit reports, and to add or delete inspectors.



Email

Send inquiries, including questions on station and inspector licensing, inspector training, testing procedures, and fraudulent testing complaints, to <u>industry@cleanairforce.com</u>.



Live Chat

Visit www.cleanairforce.com to access live chat assistance.



Georgia Analyzer System (GAS) Messages

- Always check for current messages. You may review up to 100 messages on your analyzer through the retrieval function, or you may view select GAS messages on the GCAF website.
- Sign up for e-mail receipt of GAS messages.



PROGRAM RESOURCES FOR STATION ASSISTANCE

FORMS & PROGRAM INFO

For motorist assistance materials

Bookmark https://cleanairforce.com/common/forms-and-programs.

For station assistance materials

Bookmark https://cleanairforce.com/common/forms-and-programs.

<u>View the Station Owner Presentation</u> for a refresher on program procedures and requirements.

Quarterly E-newsletter

The station e-newsletter is distributed quarterly, offering program reminders and tips.

Sign up to receive the e-newsletter.

Social Media

- Like GCAF on Facebook via www.facebook.com/GeorgiasCleanAirForce.
- Follow GCAF on X via x.com/GACleanAirForce.
- Subscribe to the GCAF YouTube channel via www.cleanairforce.com/youtube.
- Follow GCAF on Instagram at www.instagram.com/GeorgiasCleanAirForce.

PR Campaigns

All campaigns are available at https://cleanairforce.com/common/press.



<u>Learn how to gain access to downloadable PR campaign assets, such as social media images, YouTube videos, and infographics.</u>



HOW TO OBTAIN RESOURCES

How to Order E-Certs

E-certs can be ordered 24/7 on the GCAF Dashboard, located at www.gadashboard.com.

Question and Answer (Q&A) Brochures + Business Cards

You may pick up English brochures by visiting one of the two GCAF training locations, <u>GCAF Central</u> or <u>GCAF North</u>. English and Spanish Q&A business cards are also available. There is no charge for brochures or business cards.

Motorists' Rights Posters

Duplicate <u>Motorists' Rights posters</u> can be purchased at GCAF Central, GCAF North, and the GCAF Service Centers located in DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Fayette counties. <u>See office locations and hours.</u> Duplicate posters cost \$10 (money order payable to "Opus Inspection, Inc.").

Station Signage

A list of GCAF-approved sign vendors can be viewed via the <u>GCAF website</u>, along with sign specifications. Please remember that stations are only authorized to use the GCAF logo on their certified signage. The GCAF logo should NOT be used on business promotional items, such as business cards, flyers, advertising, etc.

Inspector ID Badges

Replacement inspector ID badges cost \$25 and can only be purchased at GCAF Central by money order, made payable to "Opus Inspection, Inc."



PROGRAM RESOURCES REMINDERS

- GCAF offers a variety of informative and educational materials to assist emissions inspectors with the testing process.
- Always display the most recent educational materials in your station. Damaged and outdated materials might give motorists inaccurate information and a poor impression of your station.
- Be mindful of attractive ways to display educational material so that it is eye-catching (e.g., use brochure holders, framed materials, etc.).
- Always make GCAF information easily accessible to motorists. Place Q&A brochures or business cards in a prominent location. Avoid placing them behind other items. Motorists are more likely to read the information and answer their own questions while waiting if GCAF materials are easily accessible.
- If a motorist's vehicle does not pass the inspection, show him or her the failing areas on the vehicle inspection report (VIR) and provide a Q&A brochure or business card to take home.
- If no one at your station can answer a motorist's question, please refer him or her to the GCAF website or 800.449.2471 for assistance.



SPEAKING WITH THE PRESS

MEDIA INTERACTION TIPS

If you are approached by the media regarding an issue or a consumer complaint about your station or Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF), it is essential to know how to R.E.A.C.T.

Refer

Refer all media inquiries immediately to the GCAF communications team liaison, Rebecca Robinson.
 Contact information is listed below.

Early Outreach Is Key

It's important to act quickly when approached by the media. The sooner you share a media query
with the GCAF communications team, the faster an issue can be addressed and resolved. In some
scenarios, the communications team will develop a statement or set up an interview to respond to
the request.

Assess Level

- If you receive a call from a reporter, ask for the following information and provide it to the communications team liaison as soon as possible.
 - The specific issue or request
 - The reporter's name, outlet, and contact information (mobile phone and email)
 - The reporter's deadline

<u>Clear Responses with Senior Contacts</u>

• Only the GCAF communications team is authorized to speak with the media about Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF). Once you have gathered the pertinent information, share it with the communications team liaison immediately.

Take Caution

- Reporters will sometimes ask leading questions to get you to provide the information they want. If you are asked a question by a reporter, the best response is:
 - "I am not authorized to comment, but I can put you in touch with our communications team."
- Direct them to:
 - Rebecca Robinson, Opus Inspection for Georgia's Clean Air Force
 678.465.7486 (this number is for media inquiries only) | Email: rebecca.robinson@opusinspection.com



SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS



Follow Georgia's Clean Air Force's pages from your business's page(s).

Make sure to follow the official Georgia's Clean Air Force social media pages.

Share Georgia's Clean Air Force's posts.

After you follow these accounts, you'll begin seeing Georgia's Clean Air Force's posts in your feed.

Share posts that are relevant to your business so your followers see these updates and learn more about emissions testing.

Create your own posts.

Develop your own posts to raise awareness of the importance of emissions testing. Help customers see testing as a way to help Georgia breathe a little easier.

Learn how to view sample posts and download program graphics.

Know your audience.

Your social media pages should be tailored to your customer base, not your personal interests.

Be active on your social media page(s).

In general, post two to three times a week.

Provide great customer service.

Answer your customers' questions and help them solve problems.



Never comment on behalf of Georgia's Clean Air Force.

Instead, direct program inquiries to GCAF at info@cleanairforce.com or 800.449.2471.

Don't use technical jargon in your posts.

Aim to be understood.

Don't ignore questions you receive through your pages(s).

Respond quickly, politely, and professionally.

Don't neglect your page(s).

They can't work for you unless you use them regularly.

Don't engage in arguments on your social pages.

It's never a good idea.



SOCIAL MEDIA & MARKETING IDEAS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Show Your Human Side

Post photos or short videos of your team working, smiling, and helping customers. It builds trust and relatability.

Educate with Purpose

Share simple, helpful content like "Testing Tip Tuesdays" or quick videos on what to do before an emissions test.

Be Consistent, Not Constant

You don't need to post every day, just consistently. Even 1–2 quality posts per week keep your business top-of-mind.

Embrace Video

Short-form videos (under 30 seconds) perform well. Try filming a "behind-the-scenes look" or a quick question-and-answer video.

★ Use Google Business & Reviews

Encourage happy customers to leave a review. Respond to all reviews, good or bad, to show professionalism and care.

Make Location Work for You

Tag your shop's location in every post and use local hashtags like #AtlantaAuto or #GwinnettGA to attract nearby customers.

Offer Online Booking (or Call-Ahead Info)

Make it easy for people to find out wait times, hours of operation, or whether they can call ahead, even if it's through a pinned post or story highlight.

Highlight Positive Feedback

Turn great customer comments or messages into graphics or quote posts (with permission). Real words from real people build credibility.

Seasonal & Timely Reminders

Use events like Earth Day or Clean Air Month to remind people how and why to get tested.

Partner & Cross-Promote

Collaborate with local businesses (like car washes or repair shops) for shout-outs, promotions, or giveaways that boost exposure.



GCAF'S SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS + RESOURCES



Facebook: Georgia's Clean Air Force





X: @GACleanAirForce





YouTube: GeorgiasCleanAirForce





INSTAGRAM: GeorgiasCleanAirForce



DID YOU KNOW?

GCAF now offers social media templates and graphics for your station to use. New resources include testing tips, PR campaign assets, advertising graphics, and customizable templates for your business! <u>Learn how to gain access to these resources</u>.



PROMOTE YOUR PARTICIPATION



SIGN UP TO SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT

Visit the below link to acknowledge your station's review of the Inspection Check customer service toolkit and your commitment to using the best practices it outlines.



GCAF will select "Featured Stations" for social media shout-outs.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE DIGITAL RESOURCES



Digital logos and QR codes are available to market your station!

Once you have completed the online form, you will receive an email with access to an online portal. The portal provides downloadable program logos and QR codes.

Incorporate the logo in:

- Your website
- Social media
- o Printed materials, including signage, advertisements, and receipts

Online form for positive customer service submissions

An online link via QR code is included for your customers to use to submit positive customer service experiences <u>via the Good Service Shoutout form</u>. GCAF will feature positive comments on our social media.



THANK YOU FOR PARICIPATING!