

Council customer service officer Job Description

A free job description template for the Local government industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This council customer service officer job description template is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and local government practices at the time of publication. Confirm the applicable modern award or enterprise agreement for your council and ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws.

1. Position overview

A council customer service officer is the first point of contact for the community — handling enquiries at the counter, over the phone and online, processing payments and applications, logging and tracking service requests, and directing residents to the right council services. The role blends strong customer service with accurate administration and a good working knowledge of council functions.

In Australia, council customer service officers are typically classified under the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112) as indoor or administrative employees on the shared Level 1–11 scale, usually around Level 2 to Level 4 depending on responsibility and the range of duties performed. Many councils pay under an enterprise agreement instead of the award.

This template provides a foundation for creating clear, compliant job descriptions that attract capable, community-focused staff. Once hired, manage your customer service and admin rosters efficiently with rostering software.

2. Key responsibilities

Front-counter service

Greeting residents and visitors at the customer service centre, answering enquiries and providing information about council services, facilities and programs.

Phone and online enquiries

Handling incoming calls, emails and online enquiries promptly and professionally, and following up to ensure residents receive a resolution.

Payments and transactions

Processing rates, fees, fines and other payments accurately, issuing receipts, and reconciling cash and transactions at end of shift.

Applications and forms

Receiving and checking applications, permits and forms, entering data accurately and forwarding matters to the relevant council team.

Service requests

Logging service requests and complaints in the council system, allocating them to the correct department and keeping residents updated on progress.

Records and administration

Maintaining accurate customer records, updating information in council systems, and supporting general administrative tasks across the service centre.

3. Skills and attributes

- Communication: Clear, courteous and patient communication with residents in person, on the phone and in writing.
- Customer focus: A genuine service mindset and the resilience to handle frustrated or vulnerable customers calmly and professionally.
- Accuracy: Careful, precise handling of payments, applications and data entry across multiple council systems.
- System confidence: Comfort learning and using customer, records and payment systems, plus general computer literacy.
- Problem solving: Ability to interpret enquiries, find the right information and route matters to the correct team quickly.
- Organisation: Managing a busy counter and phone queue while keeping records up to date and meeting service standards.

4. Qualifications and requirements

The qualifications for council customer service officer positions depend on the service centre and level of responsibility. Some are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable.

- Customer service experience (required) — Experience in a customer-facing role, ideally in government, retail, banking or a call centre
- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Computer literacy (required) — Confident use of computers, email and business systems for data entry and payments
- Certificate in customer engagement or business — A Certificate III in Customer Engagement or Business is advantageous but not essential
- Cash handling experience — Previous cash handling and reconciliation experience is desirable
- Local government knowledge — Familiarity with council services and processes is an advantage but can be trained

5. Working conditions

- Indoor work at a customer service centre or council office
- Regular face-to-face, phone and online contact with the public
- Standard business hours, with some councils offering flexible or extended-hours cover
- Occasional interaction with frustrated or vulnerable customers
- Use of multiple council systems for payments, records and service requests
- Compliance with council policies, privacy obligations and workplace health and safety requirements

6. Award information

Local Government Industry Award 2020

Most council customer service officer positions in Australia are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112). This modern award sets minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for council indoor and administrative employees. View current Local Government Award pay rates.

The award uses a shared Level 1–11 classification ladder. A customer service officer is typically classified around Level 2 to Level 4 depending on responsibility and the range of duties — for FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). Casual employees receive a 25% loading. Many councils pay above the award under an enterprise agreement — always check. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Penalty rates and allowances

Under MA000112, most customer service officers work ordinary business hours, but penalties apply where staff cover weekends or extended hours: for full-time and part-time staff, Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250%. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty.

Overtime applies for hours beyond ordinary hours, and a first aid allowance (about \$0.54/hr) may apply. Confirm the current rates and allowances that apply to your council, and check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a council customer service officer do?

A council customer service officer is the first point of contact for the community — handling enquiries at the counter, over the phone and online, processing rates, fees and other payments, logging service requests, receiving applications and forms, and directing residents to the right council services. It is a public-facing role combining strong customer service with accurate administration.

Q: What award covers council customer service officers in Australia?

Most council customer service officer positions are covered by the Local Government Industry Award 2020 (MA000112), which sets minimum pay, penalty rates and conditions across a shared Level 1–11 scale. Many councils instead pay under an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your council.

Q: What classification level should I use for a customer service officer?

Under the Local Government Award, customer service officers are typically classified around Level 2 to Level 4 depending on responsibility and the range of duties. For FY2026/27, Level 1 is \$27.11/hr and Level 5 is \$31.30/hr (full-time/part-time). See our Local Government Award pay guide for current rates, and check any enterprise agreement.

Q: Do I need to include pay rates in a job description?

It's not legally required, but including indicative pay rates can attract more applicants and set clear expectations. You can reference the applicable award or enterprise-agreement rate, or use phrases like 'Award rates plus penalties' or 'Competitive hourly rate based on experience.' Check the current Local Government Award rates for guidance.

Qualifications

Q: Do council customer service officers need a qualification?

Not usually. Most roles are open to candidates with strong customer service experience, and a Certificate III in Customer Engagement or Business is advantageous rather than essential. Employers generally value cash-handling experience, computer literacy and the ability to stay calm under pressure. Local government knowledge is an advantage but can be trained on the job.

Q: What experience should I look for in a customer service officer?

Look for experience in a customer-facing role — government, retail, banking or a call centre — where the candidate has handled enquiries, payments and difficult customers. Strong communication, accuracy with data and payments, and comfort learning new systems are the most transferable skills for a busy council service centre.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a customer service officer?

Mandatory requirements usually include customer service experience, working rights in Australia and computer literacy. Preferred qualifications include cash-handling experience, a customer engagement or business certificate and local government knowledge. Avoid over-qualifying the role, as it narrows your candidate pool unnecessarily.

Q: Can I hire customer service officers without council experience?

Yes. Many councils hire from retail, banking or call-centre backgrounds and train staff on council systems and processes. Focus on communication, resilience, accuracy and system confidence. Clear job descriptions help candidates understand the counter and phone work and self-select appropriately.

Employment

Q: Should I hire casual or permanent customer service officers?

This depends on your service centre hours and workload. Casual officers offer flexibility for peak periods and relief cover but attract a 25% casual loading under the Local Government Award. Permanent part-time or full-time staff provide continuity and stronger retention. Many councils use a mix — permanent staff for core hours and casuals for peaks and leave cover.

Q: What penalty rates apply to customer service officers?

Under the Local Government Award (MA000112), most customer service officers work ordinary hours, but where they cover weekends or extended hours, Saturday is paid at 150%, Sunday at 175% and public holidays at 250% for full-time and part-time staff. Casual rates are higher again because the 25% loading is added to the penalty. Use award interpretation software to calculate rates accurately.

Q: Does an enterprise agreement affect customer service officer pay?

Often, yes. Many councils have an enterprise agreement that pays above the award and may provide additional entitlements such as a 35-hour week or rostered days off. Where an agreement applies, its terms prevail (it must leave employees better off overall than the award). Always confirm whether an agreement applies before setting pay.

Q: What should I include in a customer service officer employment contract?

Key elements include: position title and classification level, employment type (casual, part-time or full-time), hourly rate, applicable award or enterprise agreement, reporting structure, main duties, service centre location and required experience. For casuals, include the 25% casual loading. Use our digital employment contracts to simplify this process.

Rostering

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to customer service staff?

Award and agreement rostering rules vary, so confirm the notice period that applies to your council. As a general practice, providing rosters at least 7 days in advance gives staff visibility of their shifts. Using rostering software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I roster a council customer service centre?

Match staffing to counter and phone demand across opening hours, cover breaks so the centre stays staffed, and balance hours fairly across the team. Use rostering tools to fill gaps when staff are absent and to manage any weekend or extended-hours cover. This keeps service standards high without overloading individual officers.

Q: What breaks are customer service officers entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or enterprise agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Because the counter must stay staffed, plan breaks around demand and ensure staff record their time accurately. Use time and attendance tools to support compliance.

Q: How do I manage customer service officer availability for rostering?

Collect availability preferences during onboarding and update them regularly. Use HR software and rostering tools to track when each officer can work and any skill or system constraints. Set clear policies about minimum availability and how to request changes, which simplifies coverage of your service centre.