

Topic: Appointments Only or Full Counter Service

Question by: Juin Charnell

Jurisdiction: Minnesota

Date: April 7, 2021

Jurisdiction	Question(s)		
	<b>Question 1</b> If you moved to an appointment only approach during the pandemic, what was the reception from the public?	<b>Question 2</b> Will you continue to use appointments only or was it temporary?	<b>Question 3</b> If you used appointments and full service, were you able to let staff work from home?
<b>Manitoba</b>			
<b>Corporations Canada</b>			
<b>Alabama</b>			
<b>Alaska</b>			
<b>Arizona</b>			
<b>Arkansas</b>			
<b>California</b>			
<b>Colorado</b>			
<b>Connecticut</b>			
<b>Delaware</b>			
<b>District of Columbia</b>	No public facing counter has been opened in DC since last year.  Everything is done by email/chat/online filings/mail.		
<b>Florida</b>			
<b>Georgia</b>			

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<b>Hawaii</b>	We do not have appointments. Presently our building is open to the public during normal business hours and face masks are required. We have few walk ins and public services are mainly done online, by email and phone call instructions.		
<b>Idaho</b>			
<b>Illinois</b>			
<b>Indiana</b>	While our website states that appointments are required, we have actually continued to service walk-in customers as well as appointments. With the foot traffic being reduced we have been able to do so without issue. In relation to the reception from the public, the service has been much appreciated. We contact each of the appointments prior to arrival. We redirect people to online services when possible. It's been eye opening to see how many people still do not know they can file online/save money/save trip downtown/save time. Prior contact also ensures that if the appointment is kept, they are prepared when they arrive. Most of our appointments are for authentications.	We plan on continuing to use the appointment scheduler.	Currently we only need one staff member onsite for appointments. We close the lobby for lunch. We also have 1-2 additional staff members onsite for processing mail and authentications, so if things get busy the front desk has back up. As things get back to normal, we will likely go back to having 2 full time staff members at the front desk, but I am hoping that contacting appointments prior to arrival will continue to keep our foot traffic to a minimum. We shall see.
<b>Iowa</b>			
<b>Kansas</b>			
<b>Kentucky</b>			

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<b>Louisiana</b>	We did move to appointments only and are still on that system. We try to accommodate any walk-in customers, the best we can, if we have any open slots. If all slots are taken, we direct people to our website to make an appointment and come back at an available time. This has been working fine, sometimes the lunch hours can get a little crowded with walk-ins, but again, we direct them to make an appointment and come back. We have not received any complaints with this system.	We have not discussed yet, at this time.	We started off with everyone working remotely, except for a few designated Managers/Supervisors and enough employees to run the Customer Service Counter and our Legal Services section for service of process. Some sections within the Commercial Department were completely working remotely for a time at the onset. We now have a revolving schedule set up, and the Customer Service Counter is always fully staffed and all sections have some in-house employees daily. We have slowly been bringing more employees back in and presently, we are at about 50% in-office and 50% remote.
<b>Maine</b>			
<b>Maryland</b>			
<b>Massachusetts</b>			
<b>Michigan</b>			
<b>Minnesota</b>			
<b>Mississippi</b>			
<b>Missouri</b>			
<b>Montana</b>			
<b>Nebraska</b>			

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<b>Nevada</b>	Nevada's doors are still closed to public access, however, last month we implemented a new appointment system called ReFrame Engage. We opened up appointments for Apostilles and Service of Process in both offices. Our Document Preparation Services and Domestic Partnership divisions are also using it. Our customers are most appreciative with this option and we love having it!	Yes, we intend to continue using it and expanding the types of appointments we take, as well as utilizing some of the other features the product comes with such as instant chat. (Happy to talk more about the product if anyone is interested.)	Yes, we have staff in the office and at home.
<b>New Hampshire</b>			
<b>New Jersey</b>			
<b>New Mexico</b>			
<b>New York</b>			

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<p><b>North Carolina</b></p>	<p>North Carolina moved to an appointment only approach. Initially we made in-person appointments on the street with funeral home authentications only. All others were required to mail in their documents. In July when the governor lessened restrictions, we opened up to making appointments online for business registration, authentications, notary, etc. When the governor tightened up restrictions we began only taking authentication appointments as these documents are required to be original and are not permitted to be completed at this time using electronic means. Overall the public understood the policies we put in place not only for over the counter processes, but for the opening of mail as well. We are waiting 24 hours prior to opening the mail after receipt.</p>	<p>We will keep the appointments for authentications as is for the time being. The current issue on the table is the bringing back of staff and creating an ongoing telework policy for the agency.</p>	<p>The Cash Management Unit, which encompasses the front counter staff were not permitted to telework. The mail was retrieved and entered into the system daily after a 24 hour waiting period. Most examiners and all call center staff were able to telework after a two week period to outfit the home office.</p>
<p><b>North Dakota</b></p>	<p>We were only by appointment-only from March 20 , 2020 - May 29, 2020. Otherwise, we have been open to walk-ins. During the period of time that we were by appointment-only, we did not really have push-back from the public. We were only closed to walk-ins for a relatively short period of time, and it was at the beginning of the pandemic in our state.</p>	<p>Temporary - see number 1.</p>	<p>Slightly less than half of business services staff worked from home during the period we were appointment-only. (Working remotely, they were able to process filings and take customer calls.) All staff, with the exception of one, have been back in the office since the office re-opened to walk-ins on June 1, 2020.</p>

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<b>Ohio</b>	Some people adjusted well - others did not/do not like it. We have tried to accommodate those who didn't know we switched to appointment only and drive to the office without an appointment.	We are continuing at this time - I am not sure of long term plans, but likely will continue to have appointments and might be more flexible with walk-ins in the future.	We have the staff in our Client Service Center working full time in the office to manage appointments - the team of 5 people have been in the office since May of 2020. Other business services staff have continued to work from home.
<b>Oklahoma</b>			
<b>Oregon</b>			
<b>Pennsylvania</b>			
<b>Rhode Island</b>			
<b>South Carolina</b>			
<b>South Dakota</b>			
<b>Tennessee</b>			
<b>Texas</b>			
<b>Utah</b>			
<b>Vermont</b>			
<b>Virginia</b>			
<b>Washington</b>	We moved to a limited in person service several months ago. Customers arrive to our parking lot, call the office number posted all over, and are called back to enter the building in order received so we don't exceed the 3 distanced service windows. (3 of 5). We are helping 30-50 in person customers per day, a large percentage are for apostilles.	No appointments, we run this service normal hours. It will remain until the Governor's office and the emergency declaration are amended or removed allowing full in office service again.	We have some staff working from home to remotely process documents in our system. Primarily those with reasons determined by HR to allow them to remain remote for now. Overall we have about 70%+ of staff in office and have for several months.
<b>West Virginia</b>			

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<b>Wisconsin</b>			
<b>Wyoming</b>			

**Additional comments:**

**Full text of email:**

Good morning folks,  
 As MN moves forward toward a phased in approach for returning to work, we are wondering about the offices that maintained a public facing counter.

1. If you moved to an appointment only approach during the pandemic, what was the reception from the public?
2. Will you continue to use appointments only or was it temporary?
3. If you used appointments and full service, were you able to let staff work from home?

If you want to have a longer conversation with me, please let me know. I am gathering this information to present to our Secretary and we are wondering what other States are doing. Thanks.

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