

City Utilities Enhances Customer Service Using CityBase Kiosks

Several key priorities led City Utilities of Springfield to install payment kiosks in and around their payment centers. For one, they wanted to improve security for their employees by having cashiers no longer take cash. But they still wanted to allow customers to pay in cash. For un- and underbanked residents, some 27 percent of US households, cash transactions are often their only option to make a payment for necessary services like electricity, gas, and water.

Today, 100% of City Utilities customers who pay in cash use a CityBase kiosk to do so. Wait times are shorter in payment centers, and people can pay at times convenient to them. Here are some of City Utilities' priorities that were met when they transitioned to using CityBase as a payment kiosk provider.

■ Priority: Provide Flexible 24/7 Payment Options

City Utilities offers their customers the option to pay in cash, check, or credit and debit cards on their kiosks. There are kiosks located inside payment centers, as well as 24/7 through-wall kiosks outside these centers.



Here's what City Utilities leadership in customer operations had to say:

“Our customers are very grateful that they have the option to pay 24/7. They hop out of their car, they make their payment, and they're on their way.”

“We used to have lines of people outside the lobby before we opened. Of course we don't have that anymore. It really is a customer convenience.”



About City Utilities of Springfield

City Utilities of Springfield is a community-owned utility serving 111,000 customers in southwest Missouri with electricity, natural gas, water, broadband, and public transportation services. City Utilities is overseen by a governing board composed of local citizens. Learn more at cityutilities.net.

7%

Of all City Utilities payments come through kiosks

100%

Kiosk adoption for in-person payments

66%

Of payments on the kiosks are made in cash

49%

In-person payments are made on an outdoor 24/7 kiosk

■ **Priority: Shorter Wait Times, Faster Payment Postings**

An academic usability study informed the kiosks' intuitive user interface. Visual cues and consistent information display help customers complete their transactions quickly. Features that enable customers to scan their bill, rather than manually type in all their information, keep lines moving fast.

CityBase kiosks run on cloud-based software that integrates directly to City Utilities' databases. When a person makes a payment on a kiosk, that payment posts instantly to their account.

“It's a very quick transaction. The receipts print faster, the kiosks accept cash better than they did on our old kiosks. Customers really appreciate the convenience.”

“Currently if you're scheduled for disconnect today, and you make a payment on the kiosk, within a matter of minutes the disconnect will be canceled.”

Average Transaction Times

Average transaction times for City Utilities customers to complete payment on a kiosk

31 seconds with a card

51 seconds with a check

73 seconds with cash

■ **Priority: Enhancing Customer Privacy**

City Utilities' customers who have financial hardships may struggle to pay a monthly bill in one lump sum. These customers pay what they can, when they can throughout the month. It's important to City Utilities that their customers feel comfortable making these payments and maintain a sense of pride in doing so.

“If they were forced to come in and pay a representative and they can't make that full payment, it's a little discouraging.”

“Some customers like that anonymity. They walk up to the outdoor kiosks, pay their bill, and go about their day. There's no judgment if they pay bills multiple times a month.”

■ **Priority: More Time for Customers Who Need More Help**

Staff who formerly worked as payment center cashiers now are entirely dedicated to supporting customers, either in person at a payment center or at a call center. This enhances City Utilities' overall customer service. People who have questions for a customer service representative (CSR) don't need to wait in lines behind people making simple payments. And the CSRs have more time to help people with more complex requests.

“Our representatives help people with turn ons, turn offs, payment arrangements, and answering people's questions about their bill. The wait time is much shorter. Years ago, we had about 15,000 customers in a given month come in to pay their bill or ask questions. Currently we have less than 1,000 coming to the windows to ask questions.”

