



## Customer Service Complaints

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Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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## Customer Service Complaints

**Reference Number:** MTAS-1399

Customer complaints against holders of state-issued certificates of franchise authority may be filed with the Tennessee Public Utility Commission. The law states that the customer should first follow the procedures in the service agreement before bringing a complaint to the state. The Public Utility Commission will apply the service agreement standards to determine if the provider has violated the agreement. There is no authority for the Commission to award judgments or levy penalties for violations of customer service agreements, but the Commission may order the provider to cure the violation or to provide a service credit for the time the customer's service was affected. The maximum service credit that may be ordered is three months. The Tennessee Public Utility Commission may address only individual customer complaints and may not launch investigations into a provider's service standards or regulate how the provider generally complies with customer service standards.

The statute contains anti-discrimination sections prohibiting the holders of state-issued certificates of franchise authority from discriminating against residential subscribers because of race, income, gender, or ethnicity. Twenty-five percent of households with access to services by a state franchise holder must be low income households within 42 months of the provider receiving the state franchise. Satisfying this requirement will provide the holder of a state-issued certificate with an affirmative defense against allegations of discrimination. The statute establishes a process for claims of discrimination against holders of state-issued certificates of franchise authority. Complaints may be received and investigated by the Tennessee Public Utility Commission. If a determination is made that the holder violated the anti-discrimination portion of the statute, the Commission has the power to levy fines against the state-issued certificate holder.

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*DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.*

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