



Highlights: Bank Service

With online banking, direct deposit, and the ability to get cash from thousands of ATMs and stores, people don't go to the bank as much as they used to. But when human assistance is necessary, competent, quick, and courteous customer service is important. According to new evaluations of local banks and credit unions in the latest issue of **Boston Consumers' CHECKBOOK** magazine and at www.checkbook.org, even though some of the rated banks seem to have abandoned the practice of good old-fashioned customer relations, there are many that provide service that's right on the money. Detailed findings from the ratings include:

- Of the 54 banks and credit unions rated, 15 received CHECKBOOK's top rating for service (see list below).
- CHECKBOOK's survey identified big differences in the level of service customers receive. For example, for "knowledge of staff," Bank of Canton, Enterprise Bank, Hingham Institution for Savings, Institution for Savings, Watertown Savings Bank, and Winchester Savings Bank were all rated "superior" by more than 90 percent of their surveyed customers. In contrast, Bank of America, Citizens Bank, Pentucket Bank, and South Shore Savings Bank each received such favorable ratings for this aspect of service from fewer than 50 percent of its surveyed customers.
- None of the area's largest banks were top-rated for service; many of the highest-rated banks in the survey have fewer than a dozen branches.
- Even among the area's largest banks, CHECKBOOK's survey found some bank-to-bank variation. For example, Eastern Bank was rated "superior" for "overall service" by 73 percent of its surveyed customers and TD Bank by 62 percent, compared to only 31 percent for Bank of America and 46 percent for Citizens Bank.

The following local banks received CHECKBOOK's top rating for service:

- Avidia Bank
- Cambridge Trust Company
- Dedham Institution for Savings
- East Cambridge Savings Bank
- Hingham Institution for Savings
- Institution for Savings
- Watertown Savings Bank
- Winchester Co-operative Bank
- Winchester Savings Bank
- Digital Federal Credit Union
- Direct Federal Credit Union
- Hanscom Federal Credit Union
- Merrimack Valley Federal Credit Union
- Quincy Credit Union
- Middlesex Savings Bank

The media may cite selected examples of top-rated banks, as shown in the new issue of Boston Consumers' CHECKBOOK, and CHECKBOOK's editors are available for interviews. Please call Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006 to schedule.