



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 14

Agenda Date: June 3, 2022

In Control: Audit and Accountability Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Office of the City Auditor

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Kevin Barthold

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Acceptance of the Office of the City Auditor Report AU22-020 of the Metropolitan Health District's Food Service Permit Inspection Fees and Revenue

SUMMARY:

Determine if the Food Inspection Program is efficiently and effectively managed, inclusive of restaurants, food trucks, and temporary establishments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Background

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) is the agency responsible for providing public health services in San Antonio and unincorporated areas of Bexar County. The department's mission is to prevent illness, promote healthy behaviors, and protect against health hazards throughout the community through education, collaboration, and key services.

Metro Health's Food and Environmental Health Services division (F&E) works to ensure maximum protection of food sanitation and environmental health. The division is responsible for reviewing and approving construction plans for food establishments and issuing all licenses and inspections of food establishments according to the local health code and state regulations.

Sanitarians inspect a variety of areas to include food establishments, bars, day care facilities, foster care and assisted living facilities, public school cafeterias, mobile food vendors, and temporary event food booths. Depending on the risk level assigned, an establishment can be inspected up to three times per year. The division also ensures that all food establishment managers are certified with the State and registered with the City and that permit revenues are collected.

F&E personnel utilize the Digital Health Department (DHD) system to enter results of inspections, license/permit applications, complaints, and Sanitarian daily activity maintenance.

Scope & Methodology

The audit scope was fiscal year 2021 through February 2022. We reviewed policies and procedures, system data, and user access reports. We interviewed SAMHD personnel to gain an understanding of the food inspection and licensing process. We also reviewed inspection reports, training and qualifications of personnel, complaints, outstanding customer accounts, and permit payments.

Conclusion

The Food Inspection Program is managed efficiently and effectively. SAMHD has adequate policies and procedures, personnel training, and a process for addressing citizen complaints regarding food establishments.

We verified inspection guidelines are in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and inspections conducted by Sanitarians are complete and thorough. In addition, we verified outstanding customer accounts are addressed appropriately and any applicable write-offs or cancellations are approved by management.

However, there are opportunities to strengthen the controls associated with annual Sanitarian inspection audits, re-inspection timeliness and invoicing, and Digital Health Department system (DHD) user access.

We recommended that the SAMHD Director:

- Improve current processes to ensure inspection audits are conducted for Sanitarians throughout each fiscal year.
- Improve current scheduling and/or oversight processes to ensure re-inspections are conducted in a timely manner.
- Implement controls to ensure re-inspection fees are assessed and invoiced.
- Strengthen controls for the DHD system by performing more frequent reviews to ensure that all user access is appropriate.

Management agreed with the recommendations and developed positive corrective action plans.

ISSUE:

This item is for briefing only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends acceptance of this audit.