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CITY SECRETARY
DALLAS, TEXAS



CITY OF DALLAS

Memorandum

DATE September 16, 2024

TO **Mark Swann, City Auditor**

SUBJECT **Response to Request for Service Delivery Goal Achievement Risk Audit**

Mark,

In response to your request for suggestions for a service delivery goal achievement risk audit, I urge you to consider the following. It is taken from a proposal made to GPFM on behalf of several CEO's of non-profit human service provider agencies that have been awarded Contracts by various City Departments.

Project Summary: For some time now, City Council Members have heard reports of difficulties nonprofits encounter when they apply for and enter into City of Dallas funded service contracts. In some cases, they involve one particular department but more often the problem is the lack of coordination among several city departments, including the City Attorney's Office, and very little understanding or appreciation of how their policies and processes negatively impact nonprofits and the individuals the City has contracted with them to serve.

The City would be well served by getting to the heart of these problems and begin developing solutions. The first logical step is to develop and conduct a nonprofit CEO satisfaction survey that can capture the specifics of any problems and ultimately communicate them to senior City staff for resolutions. In this regard, it will be important that a neutral third party, such as the City's Audit Department, that has credibility with both the nonprofit community and with City staff, design and conduct the survey and guarantee individual nonprofit respondent anonymity which will be so important in maximizing the number of nonprofit CEO survey respondents and obtaining their candid feedback.

Project Objective: Gather anonymous, actionable feedback from City of Dallas nonprofit service provider partners that measures the effectiveness of City procurement; contract negotiation, Council approval, documentation, monitoring, and administration including reimbursements.

Survey audience: Executive Directors/CEO's of all nonprofit service providers with City contract funding under programs administered by the Office of Homeless Solutions, the Housing Department and the Office of Community Care awarded in the last three fiscal years.

Survey questions: Closed and open-ended questions that have been recommended by several nonprofit CEO's with experience as City service provider contract awardees. The attached survey has been constructed with input from service provider CEO's.



Chad West
Councilmember
District 1



Gay Donnell Willis
Councilmember
District 13

cc: Honorable Mayor & Members of the City Council
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Interim City Manager
Jack Ireland, CFO

City of Dallas Nonprofit Partner Satisfaction Survey

1. How many years has your nonprofit agency been a funded contract awardee partner of the City of Dallas?

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

5-10 years

10-20 years

More than 20 years

2. What is your agency's annual budget?

\$1 million or less

\$1 million to \$3 million

\$3 million to \$5 million

More than \$5 million

3. Please identify your role within the agency

Executive Director/CEO

Chief Operating Officer

Other (please specify)

4. How long have you served in this role?

Less than 1 year

1 - 3 years

3 -10 years

Over 10 years

5. Which City department oversees your agency's contract award?

Office of Homelessness Solutions

Office of Community Care

Other (please specify)

6. Please rate your experience with the City's procurement, legal/contracting, monitoring and reimbursement processes.

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Unsatisfactory

Extremely Unsatisfactory

Optional comment: _____

7. Please rate the length of time from procurement award to Council approval.

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Unsatisfactory

Extremely Unsatisfactory

Optional comment: _____

8. Please rate the length of time from Council approval to contract execution.

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Unsatisfactory

Extremely Unsatisfactory

Optional comment: _____

9. Please rate the length of time from contract execution to receiving documents that allow your agency to submit for reimbursement.

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Unsatisfactory

Extremely Unsatisfactory

Optional comment: _____

10. How often is the City more than 30 days late late in reimbursing your agency for contract expenses?

Never

Once a year

Two or three times a year

Four or five times a year

More than five times a Year

Optional comment: _____

11. Please rate the total length of time from procurement contract award to receipt of contract documents.

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Unsatisfactory

Extremely Unsatisfactory

Optional comment: _____

12. Have you had to secure outside legal council to help navigate City contracting/legal processes, placing undue burden on your agency to ensure a fair agreement?

Yes

No

Optional comment: _____

13. Has your agency had to secure a bank line of credit, borrow from its reserves, or use other cash flow strategies to help you manage City grant cash demands?

Yes

No

Optional comment: _____

14. When City staff needs something from your agency, is the requested response time:

Very reasonable

Somewhat reasonable

Neutral

Somewhat unreasonable

Very unreasonable

Optional comment: _____

15. When your agency requests something from the City, is its response time:

Very reasonable

Somewhat reasonable

Neutral

Somewhat unreasonable

Very unreasonable

Optional comment: _____

16. The City's contract practices and demands placed on your agency have been a discussion topic at your agency's board meetings:

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Excessively

Optional comment: _____

17. The greatest past due amount owed to my agency from the City is:

- Less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$500,000
- \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
- More than \$1,000,000

Optional comment: _____

18. Please rate the level of knowledge and appreciation exhibited by City staff of your agency's mission and the clients it serves.

- Very High
- High
- Adequate
- Low
- Very low

Optional comment: _____

19. Please add any specific experiences you would like City leaders to know about: _____

20. The City of Dallas could work more effectively with nonprofit agency partners by: (select all that apply)

- Creating criteria for non profit agencies to become "preferred vendors" to allow for fast tracking through normal City processes.
- Providing a financial advance on awarded grants to reduce the cash flow burden on nonprofit agencies.
- Expediting the time between when City's Procurement Department selects award winners and contracts are completed.
- Expediting the time between when contracts are signed and documentation is provided to allow for agency expense reimbursement.
- Expediting all payments to nonprofit agencies once invoices are submitted.
- Allowing more time for nonprofit agency leaders to respond to City requests for information and scheduling /preparing for monitoring visits.
- City tracking of promised timelines and monitoring of internal processes more closely so as to identify systemic process delays, barriers and needed solutions.
- Creating an "escalation" mechanism to allow nonprofit agency partners to alert City leaders when timelines are off track and process issues exist without fear of negative consequences.
- Providing training to City department staff in order to develop greater understanding and appreciation for the human service missions of nonprofit agency partners and the client needs they serve.
- Publishing a nonprofit annual satisfaction survey to help measure progress with reducing burdens on nonprofit agency partners.

21. Please provide any additional information and suggestions you would like City of Dallas leadership to consider in working with nonprofit agency partners. _____

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As part of the City Auditor's refresh of the annual audit work plan, we would like to submit several areas that where the City and taxpayers would benefit from an independent audit.

City Permitting Process: A review of the city's permitting process to focus on workflow efficiency and timeliness. Though the department has been realigned, technology updates have been underway and it is important for the City to gauge progress. The audit should assess whether delays in processing permits are caused by internal procedures and/or applicant preparation as well as identify areas where streamlining the process could benefit the City's economic development and tax base.

Comprehensive Zoning Process Evaluation: An audit of the city's zoning process to explore both internal city issues and applicant-side challenges. The audit should focus on where inefficiencies exist, such as procedural delays, and recommend solutions. It should also gauge applicant education to understand where there are opportunities to better prepare and understand the requirements before submitting their zoning requests.

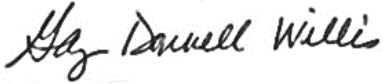
Assessment of City Hall Space Usage: The audit should assess how well the City is utilizing its office space, identifying any underused spaces and opportunities for better workflow. The goal is to ensure that City Hall is being maximized, used efficiently and is arranged conducive to departmental and any public-facing needs.

Review of City's Real Estate Leases: A comprehensive review of the City's real estate leases to ensure that current leasing agreements are financially sound, and that the City is getting the best value for its leased properties. The audit should also assess whether the City is leasing spaces unnecessarily and identify any opportunities for renegotiation, cost savings, or termination.

Lead Abatement Program: An audit to evaluate the city's management of the lead abatement program, which faced significant challenges and resulted in unused federal funds and unaddressed lead hazards in residents' homes. The audit should focus on identifying the causes of program delays, inefficiencies in executing lead removal, and the lack of contractor availability in Dallas versus other cities where the program has been successful. It should also assess communication with residents and other stakeholders throughout the process.

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Additionally, the Human Capital Development and Retention Audit that has been part of the previous year's workplan should be a priority in the 2024-25 year.



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