



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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October 6, 2022

TO: Marcia Mayeda, Director
Department of Animal Care and Control

FROM: Greg Hellmold, Chief
Office of County Investigations

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL – IMPROVEMENT
OPPORTUNITIES NOTED DURING LIMITED REVIEW (REPORT #IOR-2018-14735)
- FIRST FOLLOW-UP REVIEW**

We completed a follow-up review of the Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC or Department) Improvement Opportunities Report dated June 11, 2019 (Report #IOR-2018-17435). As summarized in Table 1, DACC fully implemented three, and partially implemented two recommendations to enhance oversight of their Enforcement Services. DACC needs to implement the two outstanding recommendations to strengthen controls and monitoring over DACC's Enforcement Services' policies, procedures, and practices.

Table 1 - Results of First Follow-up Review

RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION STATUS				
PRIORITY RANKINGS	TOTAL RECOS	OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS		
		FULLY IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED
PRIORITY 1	2	1	1	0
PRIORITY 2	3	2	1	0
PRIORITY 3	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	3	2	0
				2

For details of our review and the Department's corrective actions, see Attachment. We will perform a second follow-up review and report back on the two outstanding recommendations in accordance with our standard procedures.

We thank DACC management and staff for their cooperation and assistance during our review. If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 893-0243 or gHellmold@auditor.lacounty.gov, or your staff may contact Acting Supervising Investigator Graciela Soto at gsoto@auditor.lacounty.gov.

GH:TT:GLS:gl
Attachment

c: Arlene Barrera, Auditor-Controller
Audit Committee
Audit Division

REPORT #F1-2018-14735

LOS ANGELES COUNTY AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

Attachment
Page 1 of 4

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Greg Hellmold
DIVISION CHIEF

OFFICE OF COUNTY INVESTIGATIONS

Report #F1-2018-14735

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES NOTED DURING LIMITED REVIEW (REPORT #IOR-2018-14735) – FIRST FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION	A-C COMMENTS
<p>1 Priority 1 – Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC or Department) management explore opportunities to implement enhanced supervision techniques and oversight, such as a routine process for reviewing and reconciling at least a sample of Global Positioning System (GPS) data and productivity outcomes. Nothing in this recommendation is intended to limit DACC's flexibility in offering its employees the full range of County approved flexible work options and schedules that management determines support the Department's mission, goals, and objectives.</p> <p>Original Issue/Impact: Field Supervision – DACC Animal Control Officers' (ACO) field activity was not regularly or effectively monitored by Enforcement Services supervisors. For example, DACC fleet vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking devices, but management did not review the GPS data or reconcile it with field activity reported by staff.</p> <p>The absence of regular monitoring impairs management oversight of field personnel, and may prevent the timely detection and resolution of issues involving employee productivity, accountability, and adherence to policies, work schedules and assignments. Lax or loosely enforced performance measures may not provide sufficient assurance that DACC employees are making the most productive use of County time and resources.</p>	<p>Recommendation Status: Implemented</p> <p>DACC management informed us that ACOs assigned to canvassing activities no longer perform in-person canvassing and recently began relying primarily on phone calls and e-mail correspondence for canvassing activities. As a result, they no longer use DACC or personal vehicles for canvassing. ACOs manually document their daily activity via canvass cards to provide an independent record of their canvassing efforts (phone calls and e-mails). Telephone canvassing is conducted via Amazon Connect, a cloud-based contact center provided by Amazon Web Services, which logs the date, time, and duration of each call. ACOs also regularly contact constituents via e-mail and such e-mails are memorialized via Outlook.</p> <p>DACC management indicated they conduct regular spot-checks and quarterly reviews of calls and e-mails completed by ACOs that conduct canvassing activities to verify ACO work performance, but do not formally document such reviews. Specifically, DACC management compare and reconcile the daily activity recorded on ACO canvass cards to the generated Amazon Connect audit reports to verify ACO daily work-product. DACC management indicated their new canvassing procedures continue to evolve and once they formally establish their virtual canvassing procedures, DACC management will include a formal documented review process.</p>

Priority Ranking: Recommendations are ranked from Priority 1 to 3 based on the potential seriousness and likelihood of negative impact on the Agency's operations if corrective action is not taken.

RECOMMENDATION	A-C COMMENTS
<p>2 Priority 1 – DACC management:</p> <p>a) Consider revising DACC Policy HR200 to clarify the requirement that staff account for their work-related vehicle use by either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Using a County/DACC fleet vehicle, when available and appropriate; or ii. Submitting a mileage claim via the Mileage Authorization and Reimbursement System (MARS) for any business use of their personal vehicle, no less frequently than once per month; <p>b) Remind staff of the requirements of DACC Policy HR200 by distributing the policy to impacted staff and document staff received and acknowledged the policy;</p> <p>c) Conduct periodic reviews, on a sample basis, to ensure compliance with policies for DACC vehicle usage and the submission of reimbursement claims.</p> <p>Original Issue/Impact: Personal Vehicle Usage and Mileage Claims: ACOs did not consistently report use of their personal vehicles when conducting County business, as required by DACC Policy HR200.</p> <p>The lack of documentation of employee vehicle usage while performing County work impairs management oversight of field staff, and may result in employees incurring unreimbursed costs for carrying out their assigned duties.</p>	<p>Recommendation Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>DACC stated since ACOs now rely primarily on phone calls and e-mail for canvassing activities, they do not currently use personal or DACC vehicles for canvassing. Accordingly, they considered updating DACC Policy HR200 but ultimately did not since they believe County policy adequately addresses fleet and mileage claim requirements as DACC Policy HR200 states, “any employee who is authorized to use his own personal vehicle to carry out his assigned duties will complete the County Mileage Claim report on a monthly basis.” DACC indicated DACC Policy HR200 requires staff to submit timely mileage claims via MARS.</p> <p>DACC management reminded staff of the requirements of DACC Policy HR200 by sending an e-mail to all supervisors on June 3, 2019, and staff on June 4, 2019. As of February 2022, 11 ACOs are assigned to the Canvassing Unit, and DACC provided signed acknowledgments confirming each of the 11 employees received the policy.</p> <p>This recommendation remains partially implemented since DACC does not document periodic reviews of mileage claims. DACC management reported they are creating formal procedures for documenting periodic reviews of mileage claims by individuals independent of the claims approval process, and plan to fully implement this recommendation by October 2022.</p>
<p>3 Priority 2 – DACC management consider developing more robust qualitative and quantitative performance measures that take into account various work performance factors, as well as various social, economic, demographic, and population density data that may impact staff’s ability to meet performance targets.</p> <p>Original Issue/Impact: Performance Measures – We noted significant variances between the number of site visits completed by different employees assigned to field canvassing duties, and no evidence that supervisors followed-up on the variances. We also found anecdotal evidence that some employees slow their pace of work or stop working once they meet established performance targets. Staff also indicated that some neighborhoods are preferred</p>	<p>Recommendation Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>DACC management indicated that they have not yet established formal ACO performance measures for virtual canvassing activities. Prior canvassing was measured by in-person interactions, while virtual canvassing will be measured by various metrics depending on ACO assignments (e.g., calls made, e-mails sent, etc.).</p> <p>DACC management reported that new canvassing procedures continue to evolve and once finalized, DACC will establish formal ACO performance measures. leveraging Amazon Connect reports and canvass cards to verify staff activity (e.g., calls made, e-mails sent, etc.). While DACC management could not provide a projected implementation date, they</p>

RECOMMENDATION	A-C COMMENTS
<p>over others because they require less effort to meet performance targets.</p> <p>Significant variances in performance between staff performing identical duties suggests that current performance measures may not be effective at monitoring or motivating optimal performance by field canvassing staff. More dynamic and robust performance standards can positively impact productivity and allow management to acknowledge high performing employees and to assist staff whose performance needs improvement.</p>	<p>confirmed their commitment to fully implementing this recommendation.</p>
<p>4 Priority 2 – DACC management consult with the Chief Information Office (CIO) on options for implementing information technology solutions to automate the collection of routine/transactional data and performance measures, improve staff productivity by reducing the time spent compiling manual documentation, and enhance the safety of field personnel.</p> <p>Original Issue/Impact: Technology Upgrades – We noted that ACOs reported spending a considerable amount of time each day manually documenting their fieldwork activity on canvass sheets, citations, and in various logs, which cannot be readily reviewed, summarized, or analyzed for trends. In addition, field personnel are generally not equipped with mobile phones or other devices that could be used to automate the collection of such data.</p> <p>Manually documenting fieldwork, citations, and canvassing activity without the benefit of an integrated information system is labor intensive, reducing the staff resources available for performing canvassing and enforcement activity. In addition, the lack of a central, electronic repository for information on employee performance and activity reduces opportunities for timely management oversight.</p>	<p>Recommendation Status: Implemented</p> <p>DACC consulted with CIO and concurrently obtained services from a consultant to implement technology solutions. The consultant's assessment advised DACC to improve infrastructure around data collection to increase revenue from canvassing efforts. In January 2020, DACC staff began utilizing mobile devices, including credit card readers, via a pilot program recommended by the CIO. However, given ACOs no longer conduct in-person canvassing, the mobile devices were returned to DACC Information Technology.</p> <p>As a direct result of consulting with CIO, and in lieu of conducting in-person canvassing, DACC implemented Amazon Connect, which ACOs utilize to contact constituents for canvassing purposes. Specifically, ACO calls are automatically documented via Amazon Connect, which records the ACO's activity including: the total calls made, date and time in which a call was made, the phone number the ACO called, and duration of the call. Such information was previously manually written by ACOs while they conducted in-person canvassing activities with no method to verify interactions occurred. Now, DACC management can independently confirm ACO activity because there is an independent electronic record of such activity.</p> <p>DACC management indicated they plan to continue to work with the independent consultant to implement additional technological solutions.</p>
<p>5 Priority 2 – DACC management:</p> <p>a) Ensure that each employee's personnel file contains acknowledgments for all DACC policies.</p>	<p>Recommendation Status: Implemented</p> <p>a) DACC management e-mailed a copy of the Department policy manual to all staff on</p>

RECOMMENDATION	A-C COMMENTS
<p>b) Remind DACC staff of Interpretive Manual Section (§) VI and DACC Policy HR190 prohibiting employees from combining their lunch break and 15-minute rest period.</p> <p>Original Issue/Impact: Policy and Procedure Acknowledgments – We noted that the Personnel Files for three (75%) of four ACOs did not include acknowledgment forms for all current DACC policies. For example, the ACOs told us they regularly combine their 30-minute lunch and two 15-minute breaks for a combined one-hour lunch period and were unaware of Interpretive Manual § VI and DACC Policy HR190 prohibiting this practice, despite DACC management’s assertion that the policies were located on DACC’s shared drive. We also noted missing acknowledgments for DACC policies HR200, VE100, and VE140.</p> <p>DACC management indicated that they became more diligent about tracking the completion of signed acknowledgments for policies issued after 2017. However, some of the personnel files we reviewed do not contain a complete set of acknowledgments for the current DACC policies issued prior to 2017.</p> <p>DACC’s current practice of obtaining a formal acknowledgment from staff of policies and training they received, reinforces their importance and promotes compliance. However, the absence of a formal acknowledgment for some employees may impair management efforts to enforce policies and hold those staff accountable.</p> <p>Lunch and break periods are provided to reduce fatigue by providing employees opportunities to periodically stop working. This ensures that they are rested and able to effectively and efficiently perform their assigned duties. Breaks and lunch periods may also be described in the memoranda of understanding negotiated with various County bargaining units. When employees use their break periods and lunch in a manner inconsistent with County policy and MOU requirements, they may create liability and suffer impaired performance.</p>	<p>May 13, 2019, with instructions for staff to return a signed acknowledgment attesting they received and understand all DACC policies. We reviewed personnel files for 11 ACOs assigned to the Canvassing Unit and confirmed each personnel file contains a signed acknowledgment.</p> <p>b) We confirmed DACC management e-mailed a memo to all staff on June 13, 2019, reminding employees they may not combine their scheduled lunches with subsequent break. We noted the e-mail included a copy of the corresponding Departmental policy (HR190).</p>

We conducted our review in conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. For more information on our auditing process, including recommendation priority rankings, the follow-up process, and management’s responsibility for internal controls, visit auditor.lacounty.gov/audit-process-information.

Priority Ranking: Recommendations are ranked from Priority 1 to 3 based on the potential seriousness and likelihood of negative impact on the Agency’s operations if corrective action is not taken.