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Cleanup of Homeless Camps: Progress on recommendations continues during pandemic

News Article



This is a one-year follow-up to our 2019 report, "Cleanups of Homeless Camps: Improved Communications and Data Needed."

Published: May 13, 2021 9:00 am

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The City's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program is responsible for coordinating clean up and abatement of areas where people live in tents and makeshift shelters on City property. It takes complaints, assesses campsites, removes trash, and sometimes displaces camp residents. Our 2019 audit found that the City's program needed to improve public information, data analysis, and some internal policies. In the first year after the audit, the program improved how it takes care of the property of people displaced from camps and began to build a web application to better track its work. In the second year, the pandemic stalled some work on the web application, but progress on other recommendations continued.

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Recommendation Status: In Process

Web-based reporting application close to complete

We recommended the program establish systems to improve data quality and reduce manual processes. The program is working with the Bureau of Technology Services to develop a web application. Implementation stalled because of changes in pandemic-related priorities in Technology Services. The system is now largely implemented, with the last step being to get contractors fully set up and able to report conditions in the field.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Online status checks available soon

We recommended that the program give status updates to people making complaints. Once the web application is complete, people filing complaints will be able to check report status online. In addition, the City's 311 call system provides new capacity to answer questions related to campsites.

Recommendation Status: Implemented

Data informs program adjustments

We recommended that the program use data to analyze and improve the effectiveness of cleanups. The program is now using system data to adapt to changing conditions caused by the pandemic. Improved data allows the program to be more responsive to requests for information from policy makers.

View the [original 2019 audit report](#) and our [1-year follow up report](#).

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