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Cannabis Program: Still working on strategy and management fundamentals

News Article



This is a one-year follow-up to our 2020 report, "Cannabis Program: Management fundamentals needed to improve regulation of emerging industry."

Published: June 29, 2021 9:00 am

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Our 2020 audit found that City's new Cannabis Program did not have basic management fundamentals to effectively regulate the cannabis industry in Portland.

Since our audit, the Office of Community & Civic Life hired a new Cannabis Program supervisor, developed a strategic framework, and worked on purchasing a new data management system and creating performance communication tools.

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Recommendation Status: In Process

Still finalizing program strategy

We recommended that Civic Life use the program's vision and goals to develop and communicate a strategy for the Cannabis Program, including coordination with other City bureaus to streamline the licensing and enforcement process and focus work of the Cannabis Program.

In May 2020, Civic Life hired a new Cannabis Program supervisor, and the program developed a strategic framework for Fiscal Year 2020-21. Civic Life reported that it shared the program's framework with City bureaus and other stakeholders, such as the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and Oregon Cannabis Commission.

The Cannabis Policy Oversight Team issued a report in 2020 outlining goals and policy recommendations, including prioritizing data collection and analysis of legalization impacts, and developing a cannabis equity framework. Civic Life started incorporating these recommendations into the program. Civic Life still needs to develop a bureau-wide strategic plan, which will align and inform the Cannabis Program's strategy.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Data management system to be purchased

We recommended that Civic Life implement a data management system to consistently and accurately track data on licensing, complaints, and enforcement. This data should be used to manage program resources, adjust licensing fees, and report program performance.

Civic Life reported it has researched various technological solutions and obtained approval for purchasing a new system. The program is working with the Office of Management & Finance's Procurement Services and the City Attorney's Office to finalize the purchase of a new system to manage the program's data and activities.

Recommendation Status: In Process

Communication tools were being created

We recommended that Civic Life inform Council and the public about cannabis regulation through a monitoring report or other communication tools that include information on program performance and the cannabis industry. This information should be used to revise and update program strategy as needed.

The Cannabis Program worked with Civic Life's Strategic Communications Officer to develop a communication strategy. Civic Life said it was creating reports highlighting various areas of the program, including Licensing & Compliance, the Cannabis Policy Oversight Team, and Social Equity & Education Development Initiatives.

Visit our website to view the [original 2020 audit report](#).