



# AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

## Housing Rehabilitation and Repair Programs

June 10, 2021

Audit Report No. 2109

### WHY WE DID THIS AUDIT

An audit of Housing Rehabilitation and Repair Programs was included in the FY 2020/21 Audit Plan. The audit was proposed to evaluate the effectiveness of the City's housing rehabilitation and repair programs.

### BACKGROUND

The Community Assistance Office within the Community Services division administers the City's affordable housing programs. Among the housing assistance options, the City offers the Green Housing Rehabilitation, the Emergency Repair, and the Roof Repair and Replacement programs.

These programs are intended to assist income-qualified homeowners in maintaining their existing housing, encourage green building principles in housing revitalization, and support residents in remaining in their neighborhoods.

Program staff facilitated approximately 7 Green Housing Rehabilitation projects, 40 to 60 Emergency Repair projects and 9 to 10 Roof Repair and Replacement projects in a typical year.

### City Auditor's Office

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### WHAT WE FOUND

**Green Housing Rehabilitation projects should document alignment with program guidelines.**

Specifically, we found:

- Current evaluation tools do not effectively measure whether the project's repair or rehabilitation needs are within the program guidelines.
- Program staff dropped an applicant from the wait list, which tracks those pending assistance, for 17 months.

**The Community Assistance Office's procurement process can be improved.**

The Office performs its own procurements. The following improvement opportunities were noted:

- Program staff recruit potential contractors only from participating homeowners, other contractors, or similar program staff in other cities.
- The solicitation method for low-cost projects may result in higher costs.
- On four occasions, the department allowed a change order that authorized work that was already included in the original scope of work.

**Additional communication methods may improve Emergency Repair program outreach.**

The Community Assistance Office publicizes its housing programs; however, additional communications could improve eligible City residents' awareness of the availability of this program. From July 2018 through March 2021, 25 of the 85 homeowners (or 29%) received emergency assistance multiple times.

### WHAT WE RECOMMEND

We recommend the Community Assistance Office:

- Update the evaluation measures and checklists to better align with program guidelines and ensure the work performed is based on these assessments.
- Consult with the Purchasing Director on methods to optimize the programs' procurement processes.
- Work with the Office of Communications to improve the program awareness campaign.

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The department agreed with the audit recommendations and provided its plan of action to accomplish improvements.