

HATFIELD RESIDENT FELLOWSHIP PROJECT BRIEF

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Project Dates: July/2024 – February/2025

PROJECT GOAL

This was the first audit of Metro's First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) hiring program since its implementation in 1989. The goal was to evaluate processes and outcomes of the program and identify any risks to efficiency, effectiveness, or compliance. Findings are used to make recommendations to Metro, supporting their longstanding commitment to FOTA and their goals for equitable access to employment.

TAKE-AWAYS

The details of the project remain confidential until the final report is published, however, there are many important takeaways from the fellowship:

- Auditing is a process of applying standardized procedure through creative thinking. Auditing is standardized through the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), which set the framework for consistency, transparency, and accountability. They ensure ethical and objective reporting and establish a repeatable path of inquiry.
- The Auditor's Office uses administrative templates for conducting their audits. However, every audit is different and while the templates are the same for each audit, the process of moving through the templates can take different paths.
- Every member of the auditor's office engages with each audit at multiple points through the process. In practice this looks like regular check-ins with the elected auditor, who oversees each audit, team meetings with the entire office to consider ethical and equity impacts, as well as a rigorous team editing process.

CHALLENGES

Though the process of auditing is standardized, the application of protocol requires creative thinking. At times it can be unclear how or when to apply the GAGAS or other auditing frameworks during an audit. Specificity in



language sometimes needs to be tempered for accuracy's sake. The editing process can transform a final report. Teamwork is so important in this regard, because it helps balance the auditor's perspective which may become fixed during the process of an audit.

STRATEGY

During any audit, including FOTA, clear documentation is very important. Fellow auditors must be able to understand the author's logic as well as retrace the process of evidence gathering throughout the editing and referencing stage. Auditing is built on teamwork and verifying gathered information and sources, thus explanation for each action must be consistently communicated through standardized documentation.

RESULTS

By the end of the project the Hatfield Resident Fellowship will have completed a full program audit from start to finish, and achieved the following results:

- Evaluated program processes and organizational structures within Metro as well as within several local non-government agencies.

- Conducted interviews with stakeholders and led discussions with the auditor team on topics of ethics and equity and inclusion.
- Analyzed data to assess effectiveness of outreach efforts and workforce demographics.
- Prepared a detailed report for presentation to the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission and the public.