



# Monthly Housing Subsidy Program Application Form Design Review



Express Audit Memo  
December 24, 2019

# 2020-04

## Background

The City Council designated \$4.2 million annually of Measure S funding to pilot a two-year monthly housing subsidy program that will provide financial assistance to lower income households that rent within the City of Glendale. Community Development Department (CDD) staff designed an electronic application form by using FileMaker Pro Advance and a digital card reader to capture applicants' information for eligibility review.

## Objective/Scope/Methodology

Internal Audit was requested to perform a review of this Monthly Housing Subsidy Program application form to ensure that this electronic form is designed to capture data in an accurate, consistent, and timely manner. Internal Audit developed a control checklist based upon best practices and lessons learned from a recent affordable housing lottery project, and used this checklist to determine whether management implemented recommended controls.

## Review Results

Upon review, Internal Audit made the following recommendations:

1. Delete all personal identifiable information captured in the identification card swipe.
2. Create drop-down menus to limit inconsistencies in data formats when possible.
3. Ensure that all eligibility criteria are captured in the form.
4. Define applicant hardship criteria accepted for mail-in applications.
5. Define criteria for the acceptance of applicants without a photo identification.
6. Ensure updated information is subject to any established systematic validation checks.
7. Provide receipt to applicant with their submitted information.

The completed checklist is attached.

## KEY FACTS

### #1

For the first time, incorporates identification card swipe, rather than manual entry, to capture applicants' information.

### #2

Allows simultaneous application entry at multiple stations to reduce wait time.

### #3

Identifies duplicates in real-time based on household member name and address.

### #4

Calculates age based upon birthdate on identification card.

### #5

Immediately provides each applicant with their system generated application lottery number.

## Distribution List

CDD Director | City Manager | Assistant City Manager | Finance Director | City Council | Audit Committee

# Lottery Application Form Design Checklist

Based upon best practices research and recommendations identified in a recent affordable housing lottery audit, this checklist was developed to ensure that management evaluated the following controls to address the potential risks identified.

A. Design Requirement			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	The end user has communicated the requirements to the design team.	✓	
2.	The end user has signed off on the requirements.		N <sup>1</sup>

B. Applicant Database			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Unique numbers are assigned to each applicant.	✓	
2.	Numerically sequenced numbers are assigned to each applicant.		N <sup>2</sup>
3.	Required Fields should be asterisked and validated.	✓	
4.	Application fields should restrict the type of input (i.e. text, currency, numbers, symbols) to eliminate unconventional formats or text.	✓	
5.	Validates email address when applicable.		N <sup>3</sup>
6.	There are separate fields for all requested information.	✓	

C. Application Form			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Separate fields for First, Middle, and Last Name.	✓	
2.	Prefix, suffix drop-down box (Jr., Sr.).	✓	
3.	Total Occupants in Household controls the number of blanks required to be completed for household name information.	✓	
4.	Head of Household Relationship drop down with Other box.	✓	

# Lottery Application Form Design Checklist

C. Application Form (Cont'd)			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
5.	Require residential address not contact address.	✓	
6.	Validity check on zip code for eligibility or automatically populated based upon residential address.	✓	
7.	Phone Number format (###) ###-####.	✓	
8.	Obtain Legal approval of form(s) and media releases.		N <sup>4</sup>
9.	Provide the applicant with a copy of the information input on their behalf.	✓	

D. Eligibility Requirements			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Clearly state minimum and maximum income requirements.	✓	
2.	Birthdate or a yes/no checkbox is required for age and priority requirement.	✓	
3.	Mental or physical disability requirements are stated/included.	✓	
4.	Documentation of the selection priority.	✓	
5.	One application per household – Define household. An individual may only be included on one application and there may only be one application submitted per address.	✓	

E. Coding			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Document and test fields where logic is utilized.	✓	
2.	Logic reviewed for accuracy and completeness (income requirements, preferential criteria).	✓	

# Lottery Application Form Design Checklist

F. User Testing/Training			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Application entry process is documented.		N <sup>5</sup>
2.	Records management requirements are incorporated into the system.	✓	
3.	Review application receipt information for completeness.	✓	
4.	Staff are trained on the application.	✓	

G. Data			
Ref	Control	Yes	No
1.	Confidential information is properly safeguarded.	✓	
2.	Application database is properly backed up.	✓	
3.	Contingency plan has been established for power outage.	✓	
4.	Record retention policy has been defined.	✓	

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Management worked closely with the end-user in developing the form, but did not require a sign-off.

<sup>2</sup>A management decision was made to omit the numerically sequenced record/lottery number. Due to time constraints, this item could not be implemented.

<sup>3</sup>Not applicable - A management decision was made to eliminate the input of email addresses to reduce intake time given the targeted population.

<sup>4</sup>As the form and media content contained standard information and were approved by the Public Information Officer, CDD only consulted with Legal for specific legal language included in the form.

<sup>5</sup>Due to time constraints, a management decision was made to provide hands-on training demonstrations.