



Environmental Health Services Division



Fiscal Year
**2018 ANNUAL
REPORT**



Environmental Health Services Division

Fiscal Year 2018 Report



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Message from Stephanie Y. Hayden, LMSW, Director of Austin Public Health



Dear Friends, Community Members, and Partners:

On behalf of Austin Public Health (APH) and the Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD), I am pleased to share with you the EHSD's' Annual Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. This report highlights the notable efforts and successes of EHSD over the past year.

I am very proud to have the privilege to serve as the Director of APH and its outstanding teams, including EHSD. Our successes as a Department are always the direct result of the commitment, talent and hard work of our dedicated health professionals.

We at APH are very excited about the past year's accomplishments, and the progress the New Year is anticipated to bring. Improvements in technology launched by EHSD in FY2018 will significantly increase operational efficiencies and enhance customer service. The adoption of national best practices for food inspection methodology will focus more of EHSD's resources on complex and higher risk food processes, resulting in greater protection of public health and safety in Austin and Travis County.

As highlighted by this report, FY 2018 saw impressive progress made toward Austin Public Health's vision that "Our community will be the healthiest in the nation." I hope that after reviewing this annual report, you will agree. Please be sure to also visit the informative websites of APH and EHSD at www.austintexas.gov/health and www.austintexas.gov/EHSD.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2019,

Stephanie Y. Hayden, LMSW
Director
Austin Public Health

Message from Don Hastings, Assistant Director for Environmental Health Services



Welcome to the 2018

Austin Public Health (APH) Annual Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) Report. Through this Annual Report, we hope to inform our colleagues, stakeholders and clients about the activities and accomplishments within EHSD

over the past twelve months, and to highlight some of our objectives for the near-term future.

EHSD is a general fund-supported division of APH; we consist of sixty-four (64) full-time staff that work across seven (7) program areas to protect the consumer and environmental health of Austin and Travis County. Please see the EHSD organizational chart in Appendix A on page 26 for additional detail.

Our **Consumer Health Program** enforces City of Austin consumer and environmental health regulations related to food safety protection, custodial care and smoking in public. The prevention of food-borne illness is this team's top priority. *(See page 7).*

The **Special Permitting Program** ensures the food safety of mobile food units such as food trailers and kiosks, farmers market booths, and the food booths of thousands of temporary (special) events per year. *(See page 8).*

The **Travis County Environmental Health Program** enforces consumer and environmental health regulations in unincorporated Travis County and, through interlocal agreements, the eight communities of Bee Cave, Lakeway, Manor, Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, Volente, Westlake Hills and San Leanna. *(See page 10).*

Our **Environmental and Vector Control Program** staff enforce public health and environmental laws and regulations, which include, but are not limited to pool and spa inspections, recreational water sampling, mosquito and rodent control, environmental nuisance issues and surveillance. *(See page 11).*

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Don Hastings has served as EHSD's Assistant Director since May of 2017.

Don is a local government professional with over 29 years of executive, management and supervisory experience at the municipal, county and regional levels.

Prior to his current post, Don served as Chief Administrative Officer for Austin Public Health; City Manager and Deputy City Manager of Midlothian, Texas; Assistant Planning Director of Arlington, Texas; Planning Director of Bloomington, Indiana; and Administration Manager for the City of Houston, Texas.

Don brings to EHSD extensive experience in regulatory oversight and enforcement; public safety and inspections programs; interlocal agreements; State legislative input; organizational re-design; technology solutions; and customer service initiatives.

Don holds a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Indiana University School of Public & Environmental Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences.

The **EHSD Building Plan Review and One-Stop Shop** reviews and approves food establishment and public swimming pool building plans, changes of use applications, and certificates of occupancy/ compliance. This team also performs expedited plan reviews in conjunction with the Austin Development Services Department. *(See page 14).*

Our **Customer Service** staff are an integral part of our Division operations. They are responsible for application intake, permitting, licensing, cash handling, records management, fulfilling Public Information Requests, and conducting Integrity-Audits. *(See page 16).*

The **Compliance and Enforcement Program** monitors the various regulatory activities of the Unit's programs and, where necessary, files complaints in the appropriate courts in Austin and Travis County for criminal violations of City ordinance, County Rules or State statutes. *(See page 18).*

EHSD's proud accomplishments have been the result of dedicated staff and continued support from the Department, the City Manager's Office and City Council in achieving our stated mission of protecting consumer and environmental health. For Fiscal Year 2018, EHSD focused on **two key initiatives** that will significantly improve inspection productivity, operational efficiency and customer service: The launching and development of **Digital Health Department**, a real-time, web-based inspection reporting and online application & payment system; and the adoption of an **inspection frequency standard (IFS)**—a best practice advocated for by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) best practice for scheduling food establishment inspection frequency based on a rating of the complexity and risk potential to generate food borne illnesses (FBIs). These two large scale initiatives are expected to greatly improve customer service, operational efficiencies and the level of protection of the public's health and safety. Additional EHSD accomplishments and successful outcomes are highlighted in Appendix B on page 27.

In upcoming FY2020, EHSD's key priorities will be to fully implement all modules of Digital Health Department and the new inspection frequency standard system.

For more information, we encourage you to visit the EHSD website at austintexas.gov/ehsd or to call us at 512-978-0300.

Have a safe and healthy 2019!

Don Hastings, Assistant Director
Environmental Health Services Division
Austin Public Health
City of Austin



Executive Summary

The **Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD)** of the Austin Public Health Department (APH) serves as City of Austin's public health regulatory and enforcement agency. EHSD operates under the direct authority of the Interim City of Austin/Travis County Health Authority and Medical Director Mary Ann Rodriguez, M.D. EHSD is led by Assistant Director Don Hastings under the direction of Stephanie Hayden, Director of Austin Public Health. The cross-jurisdictional programs of the EHSD provide consumer and environmental health services in the City of Austin, unincorporated Travis County, and eight smaller Travis County municipalities.

The dedicated staff of Environmental Health Officers and Customer Service Representatives provide permitting and inspection for all types of food establishments, mobile food vending, temporary food events and farmers markets. EHSD provides public safety permitting and inspection for public and semi-public pools and spas. Our Vector Control Program provides disease surveillance and educational consultations to property owners to reduce the threat of diseases transmitted by mosquitos and rodents. EHSD provides annual general environmental inspections for all state licensed day cares and investigates hundreds of citizen complaints every year related to public health hazards and food borne illness.

Fiscal Year 2018 has seen several significant issues addressed and achievements accomplished by the Environmental Health Services Division:

- **Inspection Frequency Standard (IFS) Adoption:** EHSD successfully developed and adopted an industry-recognized best practice for scheduling food establishment inspections, including the incorporation of a new incentive-based approach. This project involved the calculation of new cost-of-service factors and the adoption of a new fee schedule based on IFS inspection frequencies. This work was coordinated with and assisted by EHSD's primary stakeholder, the Greater Austin Restaurant Association.
- **Digital Health Department (DHD) Development:** Another major EHSD milestone in 2018 was the development of the food service module of Digital Health Department, a software package that will for the first time enable EHSD to conduct real time, web-based inspection reporting. Very importantly, when fully implemented in FY19-20, DHD will provide for on-line application submittal and on-line payment—taking EHSD's customer service and operational efficiency to the next level. Also in FY18, EHSD transitioned all Environmental Health Officers to cell phones and digital notebooks to enable real-time field-based inspection reporting with the new DHD tool.
- **Stakeholder Relations/ Restaurant Industry:** Continued to build a collaborative relationship with the Greater Austin Restaurant Association to exchange information and seek mutual input on City and industry initiatives.
- **Renewal of 5-Year Municipal Interlocal Agreement (ILA) Contracts:** Coordinated with EHSD's eight municipal partners (Bee Cave, Lakeway, Manor, Rollingwood, Village of San Leanna, Sunset Valley, Village of Volente and West Lake Hills) to successfully develop and adopt new 5-year interlocal agreements to provide EHSD food and/or environmental



inspections in those communities. These ILAs will result in greater efficiency and lowered taxpayer costs for all participating local governments.

- **Community Outreach:** Conducted an extensive Outreach Program that also includes Quarterly Reports, periodic Constant Contact communications (10,000 plus registered recipients), and participation in 20-24 public outreach events per year.
- **Response to City-Wide Boil Water Alert.** Due to degraded water quality caused by severe flooding in the watershed basins of the Llano and Colorado Rivers, the City of Austin took the unprecedented step in late October 2018 to invoke a Citywide boil water alert. EHSD immediately mobilized to inform the City's food establishments and congregate living facilities of the boil water alert and the water usage protocols that were needed to avoid pathogen contamination of prepared foods and beverages. Through steadfast coordination and stakeholder cooperation, no food borne illness outbreaks or spikes in gastro-intestinal illness were reported in Austin during this week-long water boil alert event.
- **Mobile Food Vendor Inspection Process Improvements:** Successfully implemented a new appointment/ scheduling system that is significantly more efficient and customer friendly.
- **Austin's Annual Events and Festivals.** Inspected more than 3,500 individual food booths at Austin's large scale annual events such as the Formula 1 race at the Circuit of the Americas in November, the Austin City Limits Music Festivals and the city-wide SXSW festival in March.

In addition to the development of Digital Health Department, EHSD made other strides in improving its use of **technology and communications** to provide better customer service and increase efficiencies. Our City webpages include fillable forms and revised applications to better serve our customers. This year saw the continued use of mass email communications to provide important changes in regulations (such as the inspection frequency system (IFS)) and enhanced communications through a quarterly newsletter and topic-specific emails to our 10,000+ customers.

Throughout 2019, the Environmental Health Services Division will continue to provide public health and safety protection for the citizens of Austin and Travis County, in concert with the City of Austin *Strategic Direction 2023* and that plan's strategic outcomes of Health and Environment, Safety and Government that Works for All. For more information about SD23 click [here](#). The EHSD team looks forward to meeting the challenges of the coming year!



MISSION STATEMENT: The purpose of the Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) is to protect public health and the environment through facility inspections, educational consultations, surveillance, investigations and enforcement of state laws and local regulations.

Budget Report

The 2017-2018 Fiscal Year Budget was \$5,686,606 for expenditures and \$5,115,934 in revenues (Tables 1 and 2). Expenditures came in at 97.5% of budget and revenue collected by EHSD for the Fiscal Year was \$5,104,267 or 99.8% of the budget.



Table 1. Expenditures

Unit or Program	Budget	Actual Expenditures	% of Budget
Consumer Protection	\$2,325,138	\$ 2,200,650	94.6%
Administration	\$1,269,696	\$1,290,477	101.6%
Compliance	\$87,969	\$86,865	98.7%
Travis County and Other Jurisdictions	\$394,899	\$377,224	95.5%
Research Analysis	\$96,258	\$95,352	99.1%
Environmental and Vector Control	\$564,287	\$556,449	98.6%
Special Permitting Unit	\$705,546	\$662,034	93.8%
One Stop Shop	\$242,813	\$277,073	114.1%
Total	\$5,686,606	\$5,546,124	97.5%

Data Source: Austin Public Health - eCOMBS

Table 2. Revenue

Unit or Program	Proposed	Actual Collection	% of Proposed
Consumer Protection	\$4,094,290	\$4,057,236	99.1%
Food Re-inspection Clearances	\$145,600	\$140,289	96.4%
Customer Service	\$ 251,587	\$ 227,789	90.5%
Swimming Pool Permits	\$ 409,317	\$ 423,257	103.4%
Swimming Pool Re-inspection	\$94,940	\$107,656	113.4%
Special Food Permitting	\$ 120,200	\$ 148,040	123.2%
Total	\$5,115,934	\$5,104,267	99.8%

Data Source: Austin Public Health - eCOMBS

Program Summaries

Consumer Health



James Botti, Registered Sanitarian, re-inspecting a restaurant for roach activity.

The Division's Consumer Health Program performs food service enterprise inspections and investigates citizen-based food complaints, foodborne illness and smoking in public places violations in the City of Austin. These enforcement activities are based upon the 2015 Texas Food Establishment Rules and the City of Austin Code of Ordinances. Twenty Environmental Health Officers inspect approximately 4,900 food service enterprises in the City of Austin, including: restaurants, grocery stores, retail gas stations, food manufacturers, retirement homes and hospitals. Our Division performs annual inspections of child care facilities and inspections for homes that provide foster care or adoption services.

The City of Austin is divided into 20 inspection districts each consisting of approximately 250 establishments. The Division's goal is for inspectors to perform a minimum of two routine inspections of each establishment annually and to investigate all citizen complaints within 72 hours. All incidents of foodborne illness are investigated in cooperation with the Epidemiology Unit based on severity and risk to the public's health. One Environmental Health Officer carries an emergency pager at all times, allowing the Division to maintain a 24/7 on-call response to public health hazards, 365 days a year.

The Consumer Health Program conducted 85 foodborne illness investigations in Fiscal Year 2018.

In an effort to maintain food inspection consistency, the Consumer Health Program works continuously to standardize all Inspectors. The Standardization program promotes knowledge and expertise and consistency in the application and interpretation of regulations. Currently 90.5% of our consumer health officer staff have been standardized.

Table 3. Selected Performance Measures in Fiscal Year 2018

Performance Measure	Inspections	Goal/ Projection	Percent Achieved
Routine Inspections ¹	9,444	10,300 Goal	91.7%
Routine inspections with a score of 80% ^{2,3}	94.2%	90% Goal	104.7%
Re-inspections ³	1,792	1,400 Projection	128.0%

Data Source: Austin Public Health - MicroStrategy

¹ Routine inspections include inspections conducted in the City of Austin and contracted municipalities except Travis County.

² Routine inspections with a score of 80% or greater and re-Inspection data includes scored inspections across all jurisdictions. Through partnerships, Establishments are becoming better educated through better trained staff.

³ Re-inspections due to uncorrected critical deficiencies observed at food establishments. The number of re-inspections is determined by observed violations that must be corrected and is not controllable by staff.

Special Food Permitting



Danny Hawbaker, Registered Sanitarian, measuring a fresh water tank during a mobile food vendor inspection.

The Special Permitting Unit (SPU) is tasked with permitting and inspecting mobile food vending units, temporary food booths at special events, vending machines, farmers market booths and fixed food establishments.

SPU is comprised of six senior Environmental Health Officers covering City of Austin, Travis County and contracted local municipalities. All SPU inspectors are cross-trained. Inspectors from other programs support SPU during times of high demand.

The Mobile Food Vending Program safeguards the food safety of mobile food establishments, like food trailers, mobile food trucks, pushcarts and kiosks. The Central Preparation Facility (CPF) registration falls under this program. CPFs serve as the base of operation for all mobile food units per State Code. The Mobile Food Vending Program partners with City of Austin Fire Marshal's Office

and the Travis County Fire Marshal's Office to provide thorough safety checks on mobile vendors permitted inside the City of Austin and the unincorporated Travis County.

The Temporary Food Program ensures the food safety of temporary special events and festivals. During Fiscal Year 2018, SPU covered the Austin City Limits Festival, Formula 1, Star of Texas Rodeo, SXSW, Austin360 Amphitheater concerts and over 2,000 other events each year. At many of these major events, SPU joined with Austin Fire, Police and Code Enforcement to form the Public Assembly Code Enforcement (PACE). Additionally, SPU interacts with Austin Center for Events (ACE), a City of Austin multiagency office that coordinates major events between event organizers and all affected City Departments.

The Vending Machine Program permits and inspects those vending machines that provide potentially hazardous foods. Operators of these self-service machines must provide plans indicating temperature measuring devices and automatic safety shutoff controls as part of their permitting process. The Vending Machine Program received a facelift this year with a new inspection form, permitting process and unique decals that clearly identify permitted vending machines to the public.

The Farmers Market Program verifies the food safety of food booths participating at certified farmers markets. The farmers market program currently inspects all farmers markets in the cities of Austin, Sunset Valley and Bee Cave. The Farmers Market Program simplified the permitting process this Fiscal Year. Instead of obtaining multiple permits for multiple locations, the farmers market vendors obtain one jurisdictional permit to operate at all locations within that jurisdiction. This will make it easier for vendors to bring their goods to the market and provide even greater access to healthy foods for citizens and visitors in Austin/Travis County.

SPU has a goal of inspecting 60% of all temporary food booths. For this Fiscal Year, SPU inspected 59% of all temporary food booths. The performance measure for mobile food vending is to

conduct 1,900 inspections. This past year, SPU conducted 2,606 mobile food vending unit inspections.



Michael Bland, Registered Sanitarian, fills out inspection paperwork at a fixed food establishment.

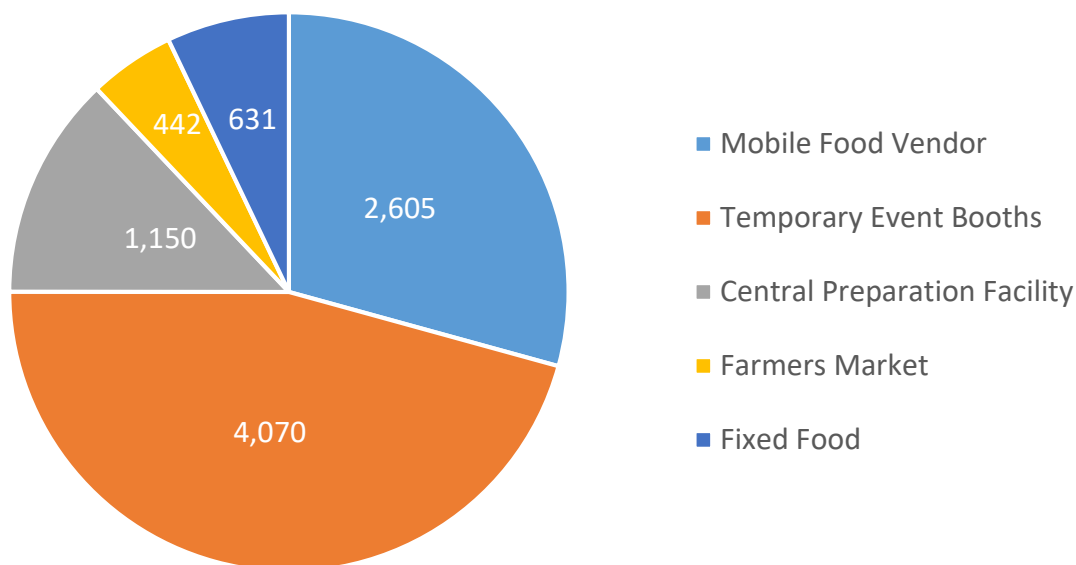


Olympia Ellison, Registered Sanitarian, removes a suspended permit sticker from a mobile food truck for failure to provide hot and cold handwashing water while in operation.



Anthony Sandoval, Registered Sanitarian, discovers improper storage of equipment and an actively leaking wastewater tank behind a mobile food truck leading to an immediate permit suspension.

Figure 1. Inspection Activities Completed by the Special Permitting Unit in Fiscal Year 2018



Data Source: Austin Public Health - MicroStrategy

Travis County and Other Jurisdictions



Greg Wakefield, Environmental Health Officer I, issuing a notice of violation for a public health nuisance for tall weeds and grass in Travis County.

Travis County and eight other local municipalities contract with the City of Austin to conduct public health and safety services. The Environmental Health Services Division performs the services requested which include the permitting and inspection of food establishments, permitting and inspection of public pools and spas, investigation of environmental hazards and child care inspections.

These inspectors complete environmental health area surveillance, public nuisance complaints and general sanitation assessments. The goal is to identify and gain voluntary compliance with issues like tall grass and weeds, litter or rubbish, standing water, exposed sewage, junk vehicles and

substandard structures—all of which pose a public health threat. These environments can lead to the spread of disease.

To investigate and resolve complaints of environmental hazards in Travis County, the staff work with many different agencies such as Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Lower Colorado River Authority, Capital Area Council of Governments and the Regional Environmental Task Force.

This Fiscal Year all eight interlocal agreement (ILA) contracts were updated and extended for a period of five years: City of Bee Cave, City of Lakeway, City of Manor, City of Rollingwood, Village of San Leanna, Travis County/Travis County Exempt, Village of Volente, and City of Westlake Hills. These ILA service agreements are renewed every year.

Consumer Health functions are performed across jurisdictions in the City of Austin, Travis County and the contracted municipalities. The routine food inspection numbers below in Table 4 represent only the Travis County and Interlocal municipality data. To review consumer health data for all jurisdictions, please refer to the Consumer Health section of this report.

Table 4. Inspection Activities Completed in Travis County and Other Contracted Municipalities

Type of Inspection	Number Completed
Environmental Health Investigations	140
Food	1,468
Pool and Spa	133
Total Completed	1,741

Data Source: Austin Public Health - MicroStrategy

Environmental Vector Control



Mary Edmonson, Registered Sanitarian, measures the depth of a pool during a routine inspection.

The Environmental Vector Control (EVC) program is responsible for routine inspections of public pools and spas, recreational water sampling, conducting mosquito and rodent site assessments, investigating complaints regarding animal enclosures and stinging insects, and coordinating public outreach activities for the Division. The program is comprised of six full-time inspectors and one seasonal employee during peak mosquito season from May through November.

During inspections, pools may be closed for various critical violations to ensure public health and safety. The goal for Fiscal Year 2018 was to have 85% of public pools maintain compliance with the regulations. This year 87.1% compliance was reached.

This program is responsible for monitoring water quality at two of Austin's iconic natural swimming pools: Barton Springs Pool and Bull Creek are tested regularly for bacterial levels.

Testing for various diseases transmitted by mosquitoes is at the forefront of the EVC program with West Nile Virus and Zika Virus being of the greatest concern. West Nile Virus did not even exist in Texas until 2002 but it is now considered to be commonplace here in Austin/Travis County. Zika was first recorded in Texas in 2015 but thus far there has been no recorded local transmission of Zika in the Austin/Travis County area. The EVC program has tailored its surveillance activities toward trapping and sampling of the mosquitoes implicated in West Nile and Zika transmission.

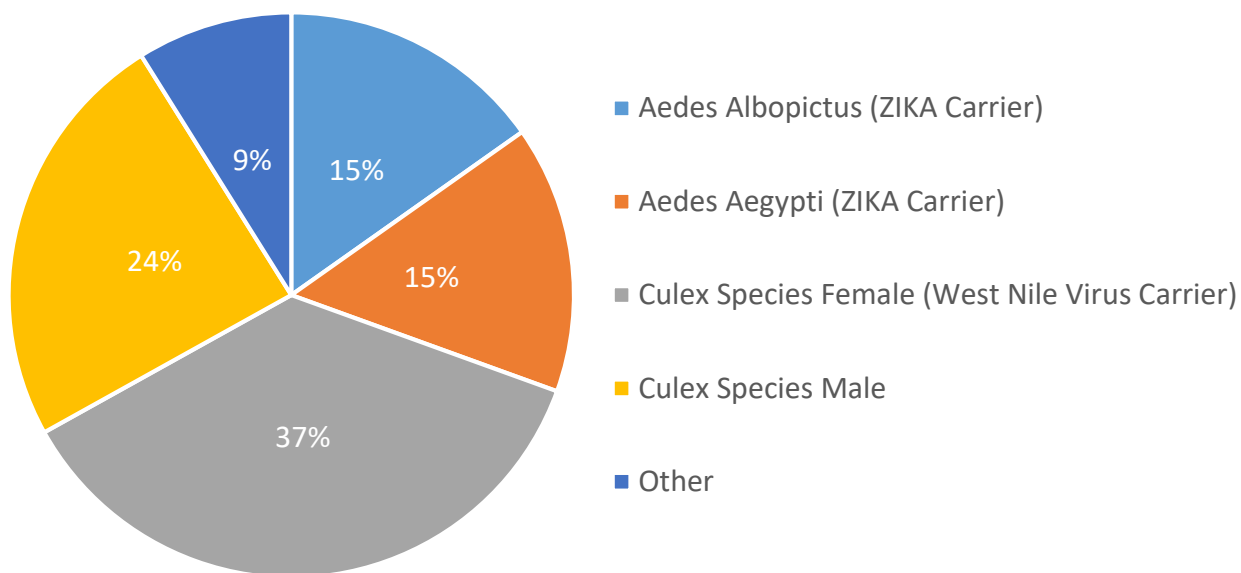
The mosquito surveillance activity follows an integrated mosquito management (IMM) approach. This approach focuses on conducting site assessments, mosquito surveillance, public education, application of control measures and evaluating control measure effectiveness.



The Environmental Vector Control (EVC) team plans for mosquito trap placement while looking at their mosquito surveillance district map.

Shown (left to right): Angie Ortiz, Registered Sanitarian, Aaron Urbanek, Registered Sanitarian, Shequita Akplogan, Registered Sanitarian, Chuck Crow, Registered Sanitarian, Lee Kelley Registered Sanitarian, C.E.O., Mary Edmonson Registered Sanitarian, and Victor Moreno, Registered Sanitarian.

Figure 2. Species and Sex of Mosquitoes Identified by Texas DSHS from Austin Public Health



Data Source: Austin Public Health - Mosquito Surveillance Spreadsheet

Inspectors routinely drive assigned areas surveilling for stagnant water. These locations will be evaluated for the presence of mosquito larvae and their natural predators. An environmentally safe larvicide may be applied to eliminate mosquito breeding.

Mosquito traps are set for surveillance of arbovirus presence annually between May and November. Mosquitoes trapped are delivered to the Texas Department of State Health Services laboratory for species identification and arbovirus testing. During the 2018 mosquito season, 704 traps were sent to the state for testing, resulting in eight positive mosquito pools for West Nile Virus in Austin and Travis County.

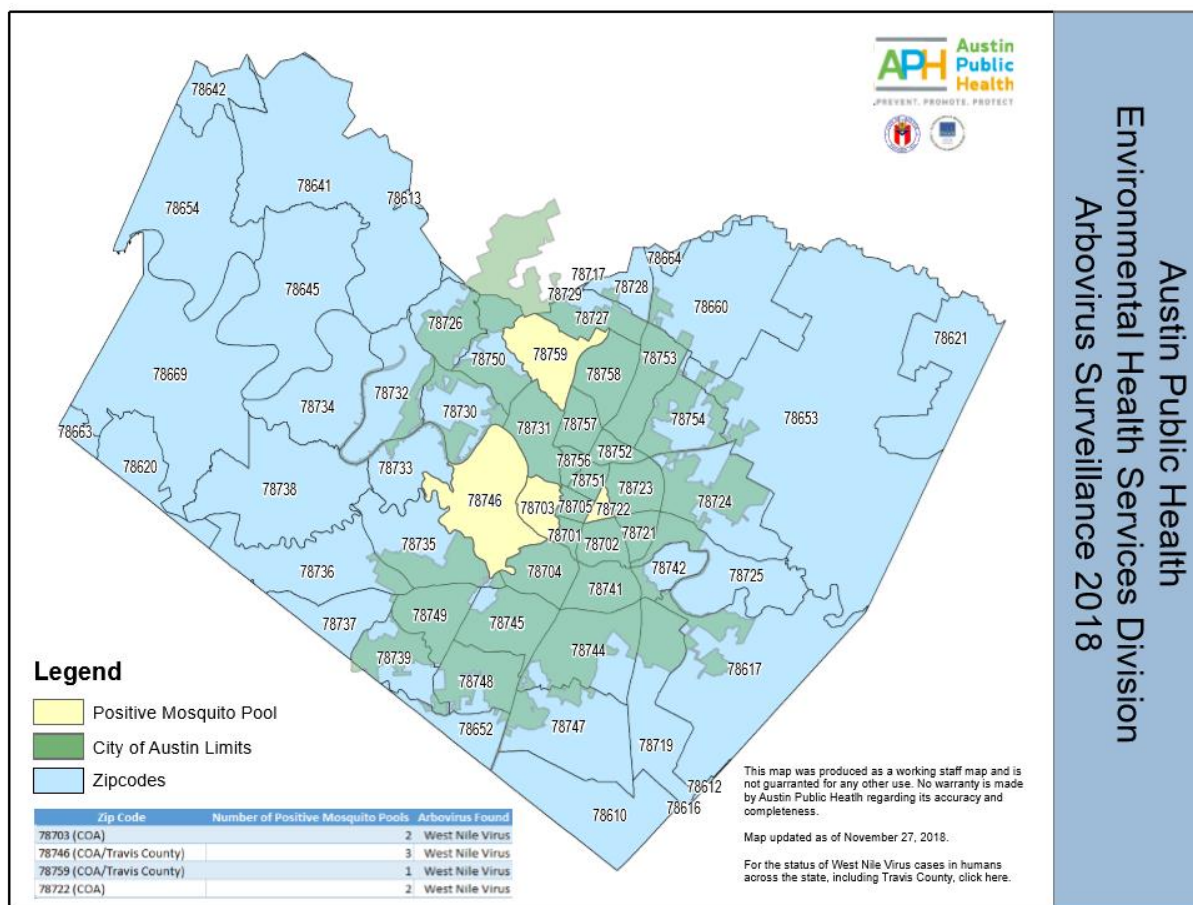
In the last few years, new mosquito borne diseases have prompted the program to use different types of control measures and surveillance techniques. The use of traps using CO2 as an attractant resulted in both a higher number of mosquitoes trapped and a higher number of the Aedes species, which is the primary vector for Zika Virus transmission.

The use of adulticide (mosquito spraying) is not part of the routine IMM. Adulticiding is not a best practice for the routine control of adult mosquitos or their breeding sites and may have adverse impacts on the environment. However, adulticiding may be applied during critical mosquito outbreaks when the Health Authority deems necessary to protect public health and safety.

Rodent and mosquito site assessments are designed to assist owner-occupied properties in locating rodent entry points and mosquito breeding sites. Environmental Health Officers provide tips on how to identify and eliminate rodent and mosquitoes and may provide control measures including glue boards, snap traps, and larvicide.

Outreach activities conducted by the Division are coordinated through the Environmental Vector Control program. These events provide an opportunity for our Division to share education on Environmental Health and safety topics including food safety, mosquito control and, disease prevention to our community.

Map 1. Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division Arbovirus Surveillance 2018

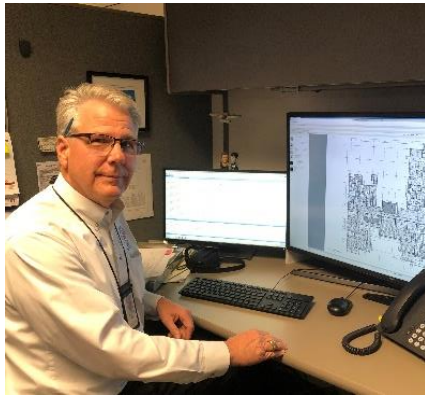


Data Source: Austin Public Health - Mosquito Surveillance Spreadsheet



Brandi Walker, Registered Sanitarian, Kera Bell, Registered Sanitarian, and Bob Manley, Registered Sanitarian, walking in the Austin PRIDE Parade representing Austin Public Health and EHSD.

One Stop Shop



Mark Churilla, Registered Sanitarian, integrates Environmental Health Services with DSD Expedited Plan Review.

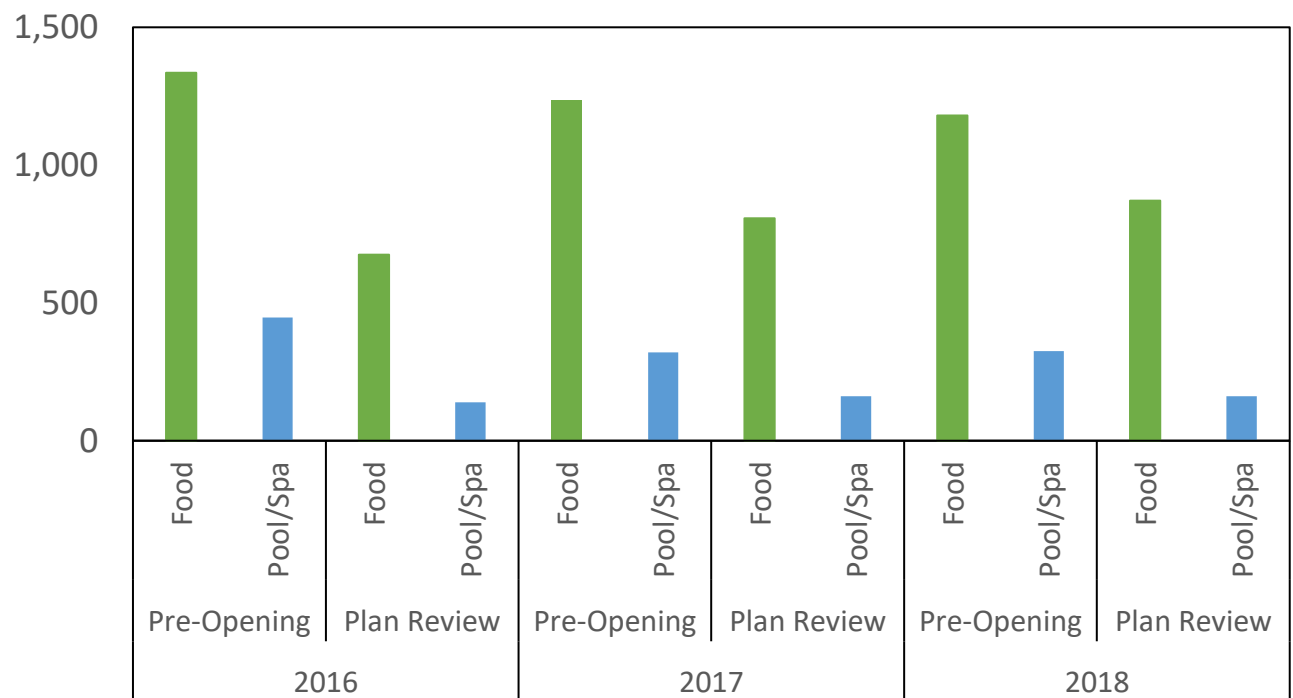
The Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) One Stop Shop (OSS) Program operates at the City of Austin's Development Services Department (DSD) at 505 Barton Springs Road. It is currently comprised of four full time senior Environmental Health Officers and a supervisor whom is located at the Rutherford Lane Campus. OSS collaborates with other departments from across the city, providing a centralized location for planners and builders to review and permit proposed projects. The OSS Program provides environmental health and public safety functions by ensuring that all structural aspects of fixed food establishments and public swimming pools and spas are in full compliance with local and state health codes.

The OSS Program conducts plan reviews, pre-opening inspections, and processes applications for Certificates of Occupancy (CO) and Changes of Ownership inspections (CHOW) for fixed food establishments and public swimming pools/spas. The OSS Program provides assistance to customers through in-person consultations, phone calls and email inquiries. OSS provides helpful information regarding the EHSD plan review and inspection process. In addition, OSS staff are available to meet with engineers, contractors and designers to offer guidance regarding proposed solutions to problems encountered during the planning and construction of new or remodeled establishments or facilities.

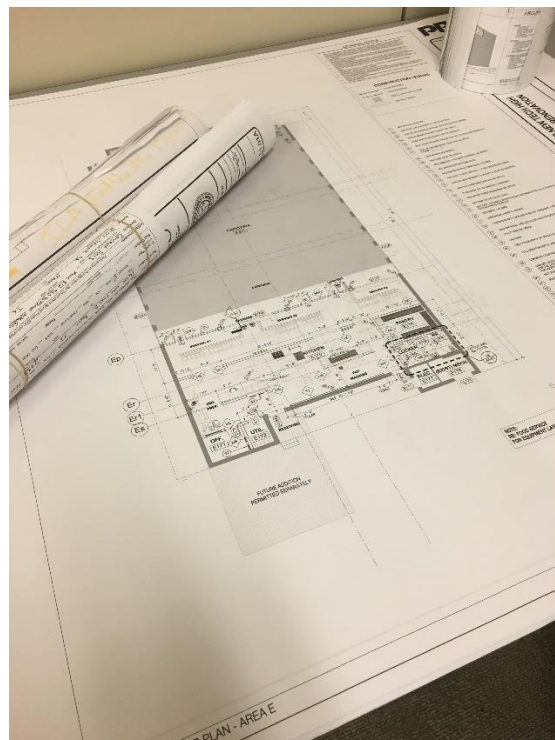
The EHSD OSS Program serves the development community by offering convenient and timely services while working side by side with the staff at DSD. DSD offers an Expedited Plan Review Program that accelerates the building plan review and permit process in a single-review session. The program includes specialized reviewers from Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Structure, Fire, Industrial Waste, Arborist, Zoning and Public Health. Two senior Environmental Health Officers are dedicated to working with DSD on the Expedited Plan Review Program.

The following data (Figure 3) shows inspections and plan review activities for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2018 which show the changes over time.

Figure 3. One Stop Shop Pre-Opening Inspections and Plan Review Submissions by Type and Fiscal Year

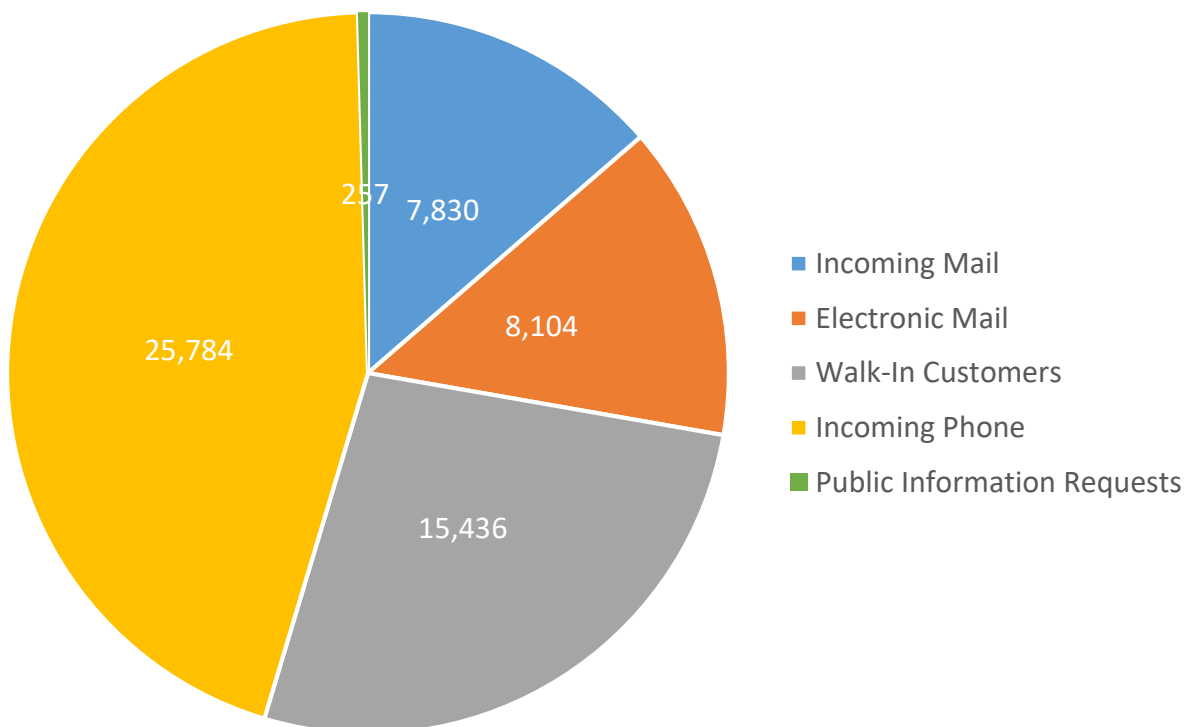


Data Source: Austin Public Health - MicroStrategy



The EHSD Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are the foundation of the Division's administrative processes and serve as the initial contact and resource for the public, applicants and other agencies. This staff strive to provide a positive customer service experience that includes assisting customers with information related to all programs under EHSD.

Figure 4. Number of Customer Service Activities by Type for All Jurisdictions in Fiscal Year 2018



GovQA is the current citywide system used as a tool for receiving, processing and responding to Public Information Requests (PIRs). This system launched on June 8, 2018 and is administered by the Public Information Team. Public information request should be submitted by email to public.information@austintexas.gov.

The cashier functions of EHSD include balancing and preparing daily reports of revenue totaling over \$5.1 million per year. The most critical responsibility is to ensure all transactions are posted accurately to customer accounts by close of business each day.

Customer Service provides support to a staff of over 50 professional Environmental Health Officers and Supervisors in their effort to minimize and correct environmental health and safety hazards. Assignments include administrative support, cash handling, records management, application intake, timekeeping, Public Information Requests, citizen requests, city and county management queries and purchasing.

Table 5. Applications and Requests Processed in Fiscal Year 2018

Applications and Requests Processed	Fiscal Year 2018
Food Service Permits	5,848
Pool and Spa Permits	1,958
Food and Pool Re-Inspections	1,899
Mobile Vending Permits	1,299
Temporary Event Permits	6,379
Farmers Market Permits	187
Food Manager Registrations	5,487
Custodial Care Inspections	490
Total	23,547

Data Source: Austin Public Health - MicroStrategy



Jose Castelan, Customer Service Representative Senior, counting cash collected.



Customer Service Representative Supervisor, Samantha Oldham, trains EHSD's new Customer Service Representative, Dawn Sandoval.



Alma Rumfield, Customer Service Representative Senior, working the cashier window.

Enforcement Action Summary



Karina Moore, Department Legal Coordinator, representing EHSD at the City of Austin Municipal Court.

The lead role and responsibility of the Department Legal Coordinator is to file criminal charges by drafting Probable Cause Affidavits for health code violations based on State, County and City regulations. These regulations include food, pool, public nuisance and various other health codes.

Probable Cause affidavits are created by researching the case information including inspection reports, permit applications or renewals, photographs and other relevant information submitted by the Environmental Health Officers. Once the affidavits are completed, the Department Legal Coordinator files each case with the City of Austin Municipal Court or the Travis County Justice of the Peace Precinct Courts and swears under oath to the accuracy of the information being submitted. Once cases have been filed, the Department Legal Coordinator is involved in the judicial process by working with prosecutors to come to an agreeable solution. The Department Legal Coordinator must respond regularly to inquiries and request from Environmental Health Officers, defendants in legal cases or their attorneys, city and county prosecutors and court clerks for information regarding health code criminal cases.

All court cases are handled by the appropriate court and EHSD is present to provide guidance for possible outcomes. Most cases filed in the City of Austin are for operating without a food permit and in Travis County for public nuisances. The outcome of most cases in both jurisdictions is deferred disposition which provides a mutually agreed upon resolution to the complaint. Cases filed resulted in the collection of \$16,246 in legal penalties.

In Fiscal Year 2018, the Department Legal Coordinator assumed a valuable role in the processing of the Division's Public Information Requests (PIRs). This role involves working effectively with the Division's PIR Specific Point of Contact (SPOC) to ensure timely, complete and accurate PIR responses.

Table 6. Type of Cases Filed by Jurisdiction in Fiscal Year 2018

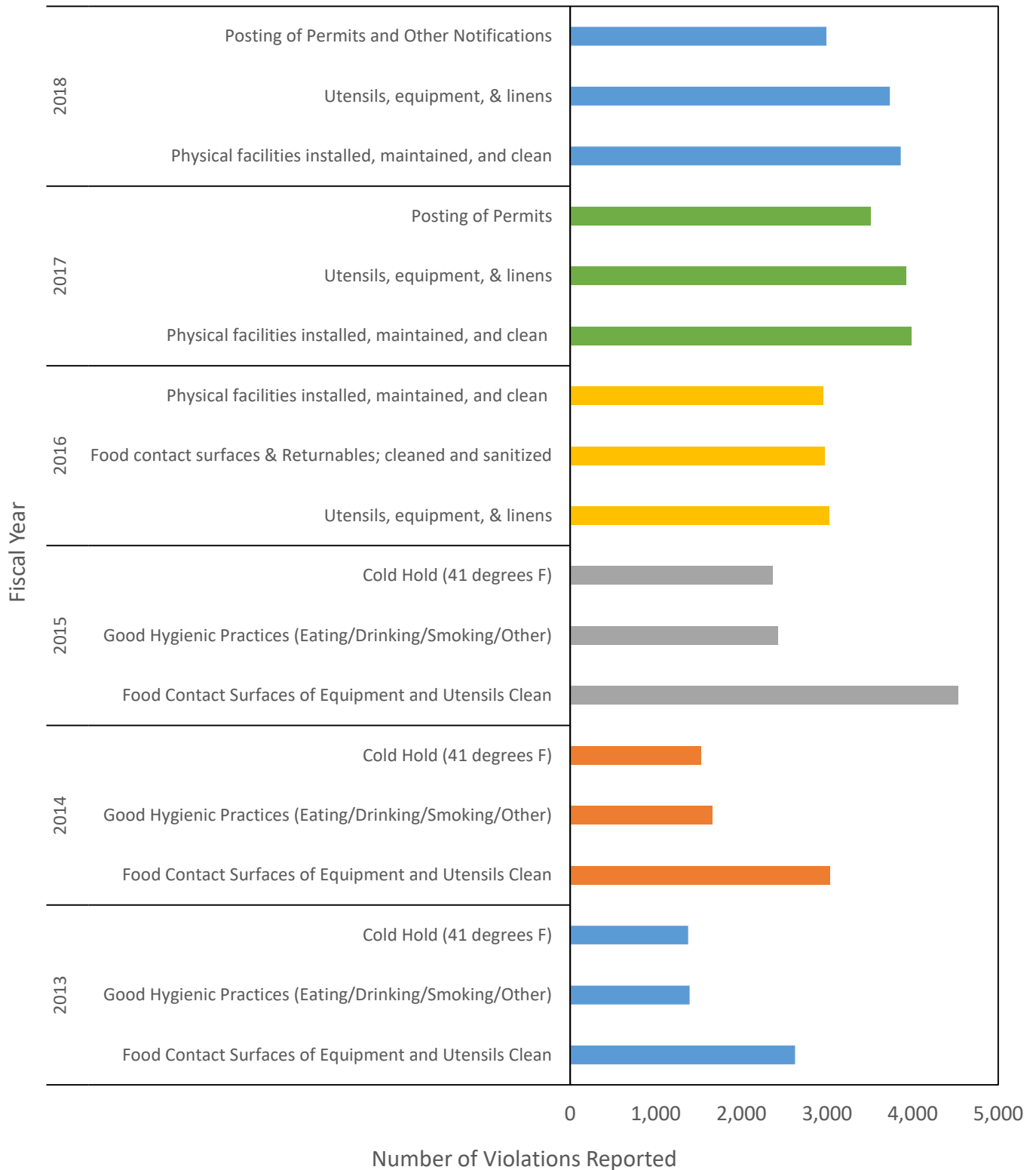
Type of Cases	City of Austin	Travis County
No Food Permit	34	1
No Food Manager	16	Not Applicable
Unsafe Foods	16	Not Applicable
SIPPO	3	Not Applicable
Pools	0	0
Equipment Hold Order	2	Not Applicable
Animal Enclosures	6	Not Applicable
Public Health Nuisance ⁴	Not Applicable	44
Total	77	45

Data Source: Austin Public Health - OMNIS

⁴Public Health Nuisance includes rubbish, refuse, junked vehicles and tall weeds and grass.

Trend Analysis and Summary

Figure 5. Top Three Fixed Food Violations Reported by Fiscal Year



Data Source: Austin Public Health – SQL Developer

Figure 5 should be interpreted with caution. The Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) were updated and consequently inspection tools changed in October of 2015. Therefore, data is not comparable before and after the 2015 rule change. For example, the violation of food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils clean became two distinct violations after the rule changes. Good hygienic practices were also refined into more specific violations after October 2015.

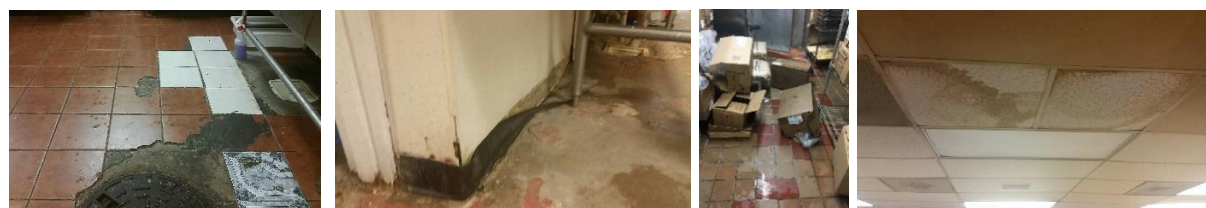
The current TFER, local code and inspection practices are based on categories of risk to the public's health and food safety. The greater the risk, the higher the points that are deducted from the inspection score.

Priority Item— (Items 1-20—Three point violation) Priority Item violations present the highest risk and are the most critical violations to help protect the public from foodborne illness.

Priority Foundation Item— (Items 21-33—Two point violation) Critical items which may result in a priority item violation if left unchecked. These items are focused on processes and procedures rather than a direct and an immediate impact on public health.

Core Item— (Items 34-47A—One point violation) A violation that is not designated as Priority or Priority Foundation. Core Item violations include items that usually relate to general sanitation, facilities or structure, equipment design, or general maintenance.

Since the implementation of the new TFER in October of 2015, there has been a shift in the most frequently reported violations from priority items, which are the highest risk, to core items, which are the lowest risk to public health as shown in Figure 5. In Fiscal Year 2018, the top three most reported violations are all Core Items (Table 7). These are the same top three violations reported in Fiscal Year 2017.



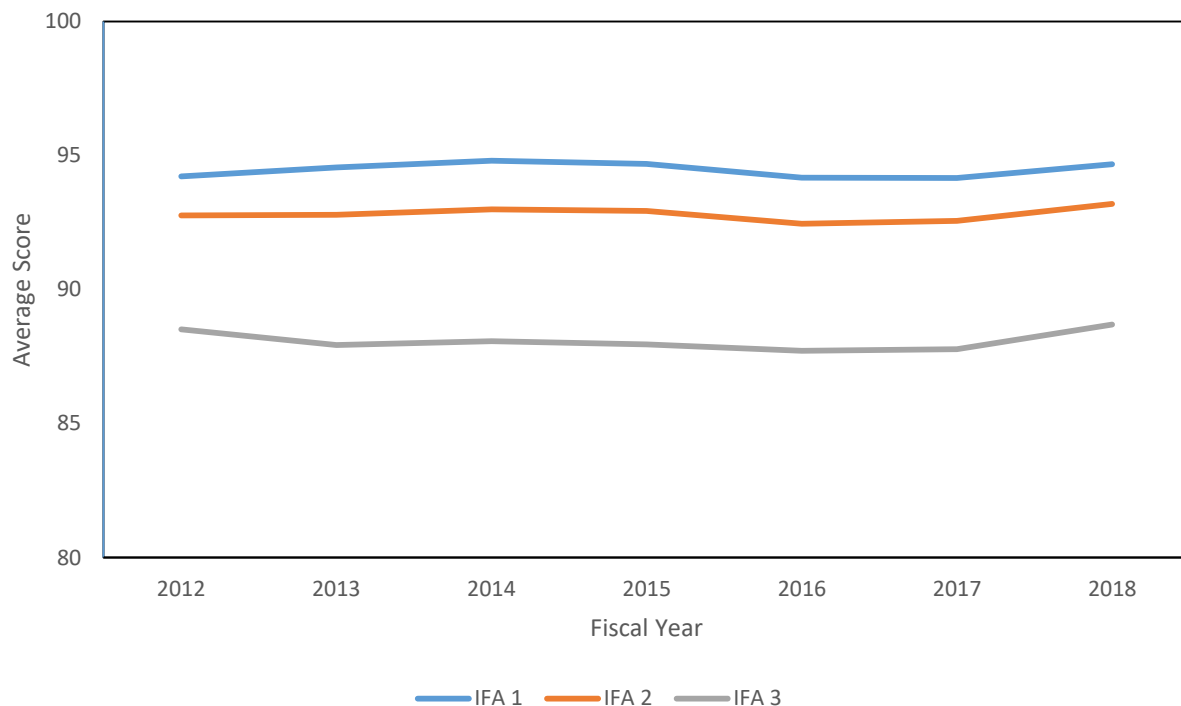
Examples of the most frequently reported violation observed and reported in Fiscal Year 2018: physical facilities installed, maintained and clean.

Table 7. Top Three Fixed Food Violations Reported in Fiscal Year 2018

Number and Risk Category	Violation Title	Number Reported
45 CORE	Physical facilities installed, maintained and clean	3,861
39 CORE	Utensils, equipment, & linens; properly used, stored, dried, & handled	3,734
47 CORE	Posting of Permits and Other Notifications	2,995

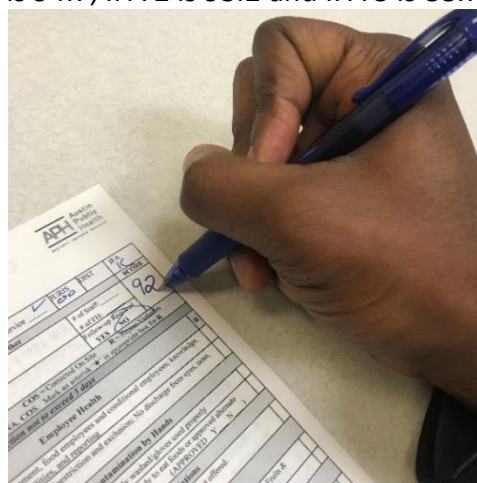
Data Source: Austin Public Health – SQL Developer

Figure 6. Average Score of Routine Inspections by Inspection Frequency Analysis (IFA) by Fiscal Year



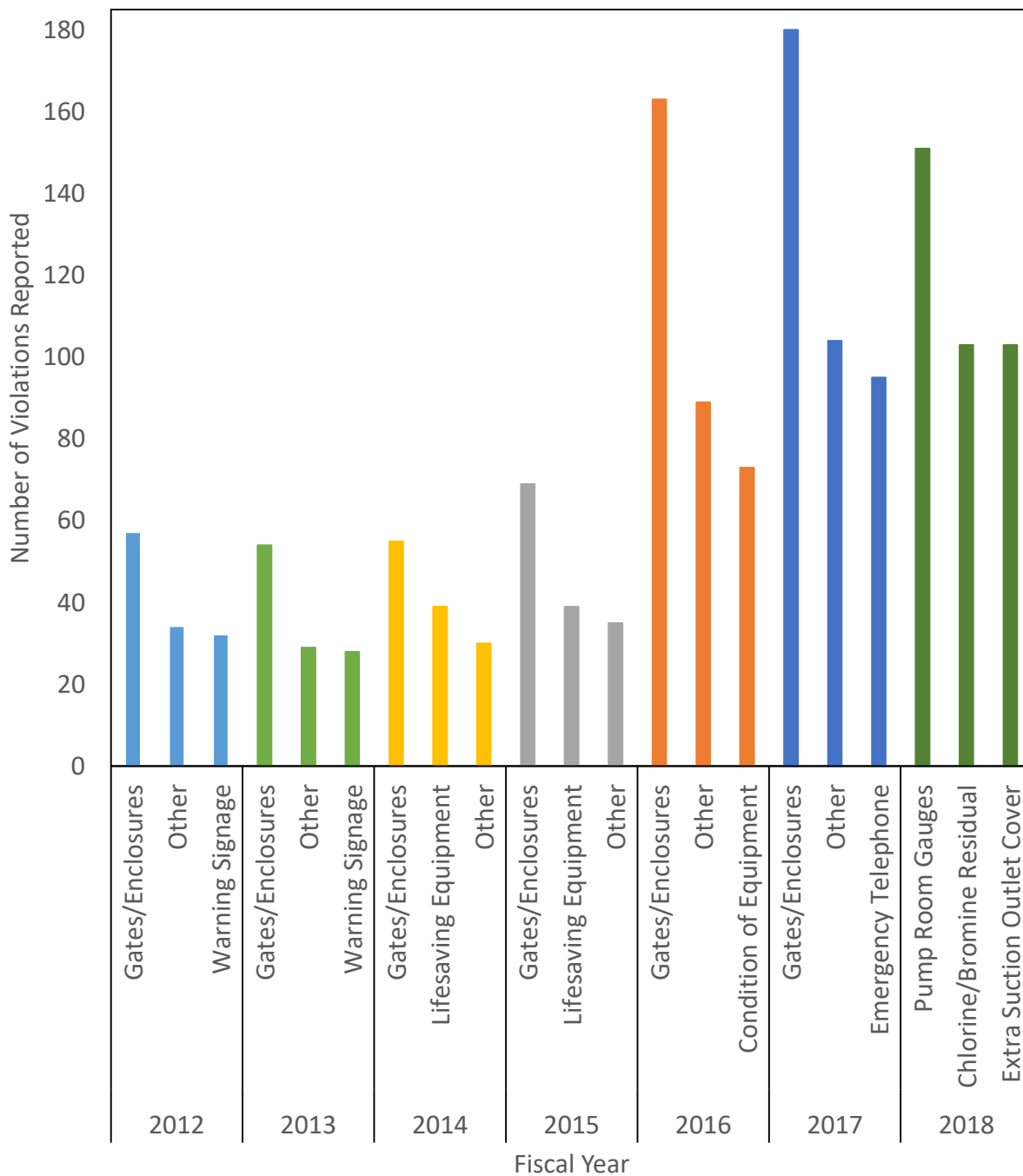
Data Source: Austin Public Health – SQL Developer

As Figure 6 illustrates, the average routine inspection score according to risk has maintained relatively stable over the last seven years even with the changes in the Texas Food Establishment Rules. For Fiscal Year 2018, the overall average score for all food establishment inspections was 92.2 and over 90% of food establishments had a score greater than 80. Each food establishment is assessed for risk to the public's health. The tool that is used is an Inspection Frequency Analysis (IFA). An IFA 1 has minimal food handling and a lower risk for foodborne illness. An IFA 2 has a mid-range level of risk and IFA 3 has a higher risk due to more complex food processes. In 2018, the average score is for IFA 1 is 94.7, IFA 2 is 93.2 and IFA 3 is 88.7.



Matt Reid, Registered Sanitarian, scoring a food inspection report.

Figure 7. Top Three Reported Violations that were noted in a Pool/Spa Closure by Fiscal Year



Data Source: Austin Public Health – SQL Developer

The above violations are frequently noted at the time of the pool /spa inspection. Not all of these violations are closure items. Immediate closures for pool/spa include: water chemistry violation, missing or improper drain covers, cloudy water, exposed wiring, malfunctioning or inoperable gates, opening in enclosure greater than 4 inches, enclosure height does not meet minimum height requirements and loose, missing or broken suction outlet cover.

A change in the inspection form was made in 2017 that widened the scope of evaluated design and operational features that govern the safety of public pools and spas. This change yielded a more comprehensive inspection so as to better advise pool operators. Due to this change, there has been an increase in the number of violations reported.

As shown in Figure 7, the most frequently reported violations changed in Fiscal Year 2018. In the six years prior, Gates/Enclosures were the most frequently reported violation during a pool or spa inspection that resulted in a closure. However, it is important to note that Gates/Enclosures is the fourth most frequent violation reported during a closure.

Pump room gauges help ensure filtration, turnover rate and water quality which is a public health concern. Pump room gauges however are not a closure item during an inspection.

Chlorine and Bromine are chemicals used to disinfect pool and spa water and must be maintained at the proper levels to prevent injury or illness. High levels of these chemicals would constitute a reason for closure.

Drain covers must be compliant with VGB-2008 in order prevent incidents of entrapment and drowning. If a suction outlet cover is broken, it is important to close the pool or spa until it is replaced. Due to the risk to life, this is a closure item.

Gates and enclosures are an important public health and safety measure. The intent of these requirements is to prevent unintentional drownings by restricting access to small children without adult supervision. Gate and enclosure violations are a closure item for most pools.



Quality

Environmental Health Services Division sets a goal to improve and maintain quality across the Division. Several Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) projects, improvements and initiatives have been undertaken by EHSD.

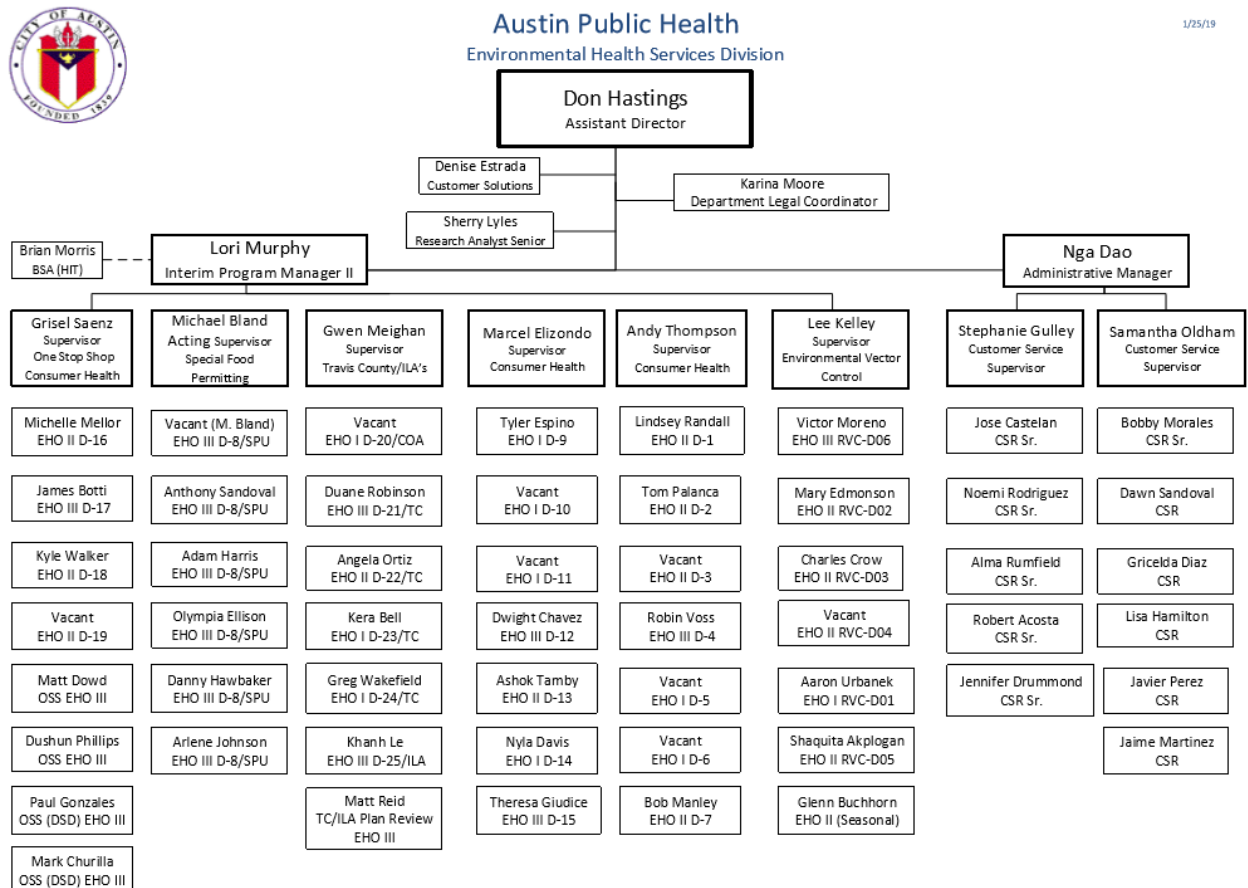
- A significant portion of this Fiscal Year has been spent on the implementation of a new database system, Digital Health Department (DHD). Efforts to complete the project include improving processes, creating data libraries, updating forms and beta testing of the new system. DHD will allow inspectors to be more efficient in their work processes, allow for paperless inspections, remove duplication of work efforts (paper inspections followed by data entry) and will allow for online payments which is not currently an option.
- The Environmental Vector Control Program (EVC) Supervisor and Environmental Health Services Division Leadership participated in Austin Public Health's Preparedness Program Zika Tabletop Exercise and subsequent After Action Report and Improvement Planning. Many of the capabilities tested in the exercise were to identify gaps. As a result, improvement opportunities are being reviewed related to mosquito surveillance and control activities.
- Since October 10, 2017 EHSD's Mobile Vending Program has been utilizing an appointment system to provide annual permits to mobile vending units of all types including food trucks, food trailers, pushcarts and kiosks. This resulted in reduced wait times. While the mobile community has embraced this change, there are still areas of improvement that EHSD will focus on, such as ease of rescheduling and continued collaboration of coverage with our Fire Inspector and Security partners.
- EHSD continues to be a strong partner to fellow City of Austin Departments. Beginning October 1, 2018, all food-permitted businesses in the City of Austin will have to comply with Austin Resource Recovery's Austin's Universal Recycling Ordinance which requires that businesses provide employees with on-site access to diversion of organic materials like food scraps, expired foods and soiled paper, from local landfills. Leading up to the deadline, Austin Resource Recovery and EHSD hosted free trainings to help owners and managers of food-permitted businesses learn about local policies, compliance requirements and best practices. Free educational resources were also provided.
- The new employee training program has seen changes in the last Fiscal Year, including increased number of co-inspections and adding knowledge based assessments. The purpose of the changes is to increase consistency, competency and confidence in the field. Ultimately, improved training systems will allow for the continual improvement in the protection of public health.

- EHSD is working along with APH on a Language Access Initiative to help provide EHSD customers with applications and other documents in their preferred language. Throughout the initiative, the applications and technical guidance documents were simplified by one of the Customer Service Supervisors to help in the translation process. As a result, applications have helped customer service staff improve their intake procedures and the customers are able to navigate our permitting processes more easily. The Language Access Initiative is an ongoing process. It is EHSD's goal to offer all customer documents in the most common languages spoken in this area.
- EHSD continues to maintain and participate in the Department Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee. Quarterly meetings are attended and the information reported to EHSD management. Continuous Quality Improvement training has been completed by supervisory staff and our Research Analyst Senior, to provide basic and advanced understanding of CQI processes and methods.
- EHSD also participates in weekly Cross-Program Surveillance meetings, led by the Health Authority, as a best practice for communicating public health issues affecting multiple areas of the Department.



Appendices

Appendix A: Environmental Health Services Division Organizational Chart



Appendix B: Environmental Health Services Division Consumer Health Issue Brief



Austin Public Health
PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

Consumer Health Issue Brief

The Consumer Health Program strives to prevent foodborne illness by ensuring a safe local food supply.

Definition: We are a regulatory program which enforces state and local food safety codes in all of Austin and Travis County's food establishments.

1 Our Call to Action ...

- To increase compliance with food safety regulations through inspection and investigation, ensuring a healthier community
- To improve food safety practices and procedures by providing food establishment operators with technical guidance and education

1 in 6 Americans get sick and 3,000 die each year from contaminated foods. These foodborne illnesses cost the U.S. \$15.6 billion each year.

2 Currently ...

Consumer Health Program Funding FY2019 \$3,956,970



Category	Percentage
City Consumer Health	63%
Travis County Consumer Health	13%
Special Permitting Unit	18%
One Stop Shop	6%

Who We Serve
All who live, work, and eat in Austin and Travis County

- 2018 population – 1,273,741*
- Visitors to Austin – 27.4 million/year*
- Food industry owners, operators and employees
- Day cares, nursing homes
- Hospitals and schools
- Summer food programs

Services Provided

- Food establishment permitting
 - Fixed establishments
 - Mobile food vending
 - Temporary food booths
 - Farmers Markets
 - Vending Machines
- Regulatory inspections and compliance re-inspections
- Complaint investigations
- Foodborne Illness investigations
- One Stop Shop plan review and inspection
- Education, training, and outreach

Areas Served

- City of Austin
- Un-incorporated Travis County
- Eight Area Municipalities

*Downtown Austin Alliance

3 2018 Measures of Success ...

- Key Performance Indicator** - Percent of retail food establishment routine inspections which result in a score of 80 or greater. (100 pt. scale).
Goal 90%; Actual 94%
- Performance Measure** - All Fixed food establishment routine inspections conducted.
Goal 11,200; Actual 10,277 (92%)

By the Numbers...

- Food inspections (all types) – 15,830
- Food permits issued – 13,561
- Compliance re-inspections – 2,483
- Pre-permitting inspections – 1,577
- Complaints investigated – 1,367
- Plan review and approval – 585
- Foodborne illness investigations – 85
- Court cases filed for non-compliance – 69
- Establishment permit suspensions or closures – 24

4 Community Impact ...



- Environmental Health Services has worked closely with Austin's Office of Sustainability, food recovery groups, and area food pantries to increase the availability of safe and healthy foods for Travis County citizens dealing with food insecurity.
- During the Hurricane Harvey emergency response and recovery, Environmental Health Services ensured sanitary environmental conditions and a safe food supply for area shelters serving evacuees.



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