Flexible Auditing for Impact

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PORTLAND ALGA
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• Dramatically changing the program you are planning to audit
• Personnel turnover
• New contract provider
• You don’t have the authority to audit us
What can you do?
How to stay flexible

• Focus on what you can do
• Split up or provide additional products
• Proactive communication to avoid situations that demand flexibility
• Keep impact at forefront
Agenda

• Office process
• Department of Public Defense audit
• Paratransit audit
• Involuntary Treatment Court report
Office process

• Things we do to avoid unexpected issues

• Understand:
  – Expectations of audit
  – Operating environment

• Can result in update scope or changing audit schedule
User stories

• What do users of the audit want?
• As a **user** I want to **goal** so that **value**.
• As a **councilmember**, I want to **know how well paratransit is working** so I can **effectively legislate**.
• Can increase expectations
• Better to get feedback early
• Avoids surprises
Communication with leadership

- Executive Audit Committee
  - Composed of department leadership
- Quarterly meeting with management
- Biweekly one on ones with audit liaison
- Two year work program provides flexibility
Takeaways

• Avoid surprises
• Over communication is better than under
• Compromise on small things to achieve impact
• Earlier feedback less disruptive
Department of Public Defense

• County provided public defense
• Formerly four nonprofits, in 2013 became four divisions
• Inconsistent practices across divisions, fundamental organizational and management problems
Audit start Oct 2017

Former PD resigns Jul 2018
Challenges

• Rebuilding relationships
• Getting new leadership up to speed
• Unclear recommendation Implementer
Opportunities

• Management issues were central to the audit
• New leadership = New energy
• Audit could inform selection
How we were flexible

Audit start
Oct 2017

Letter issued
Jul 2018

Audit complete
Oct 2018

Former PD
resigns
Jul 2018

New PD
appointed
Oct 2018
How we were flexible
Takeaways

• Act fast
• Treat disruptions as opportunities
• Set expectation that align with findings
Paratransit audit

- Federally mandated program
- Provides trips for those that cannot ride bus
- Trips routed and provided by contractor
- $60 million annual cost
Audit start Jul 2016
Letter issued Dec 2016
Audit complete Jun 2017
SURVEY
FIELDWORK
REPORTING
RFP planned Jan 2017
Contract expires Jun 2017
How we were flexible

• Early work showed issues with contract
• Unable to finish the audit in time
• Issued letter with 9 findings and recommendations for Transit’s next contract
Takeaways

• Took longer—two products vs. one
• Significant impact:
  – Transit modified RFP
  – Completely reworked service
• Could avoid with better communication
Involuntary Treatment Act Court

- Mandatory mental health treatment
- County actors managed multiple parts of process
- Current process was inefficient and untherapeutic
- We were well situated to address their challenges
Audit start
Jul 2016

Auditee “declines” to be audited
Jul 2018
How we were flexible

• Descriptive research questions
• Objectives focused on auditee concerns
• Collaborative data analysis process
How we were flexible

This data includes results selected based on prominence and consistency for purposes of discussion. It does not include all preliminary analysis.

Descriptive Statistics (1)

Figure 1: Demographics by ITA Case History
By Case, for cases with file dates 1/1/2011 & 10/31/2018

Figure 2: Housing Instability by ITA Case History
By Case, for cases with file dates 1/1/2011 & 10/31/2018

Figure 3: Time to Next ITA Case
By Petition, for cases with file dates 1/1/2011 & 10/31/2018

41% of ITA Clients that have been in more than three previous ITA cases are experiencing housing instability.

40% of ITA Clients return to the ITA system within three years of leaving.
How we were flexible

Audit start
Jul 2016

Data placemat
1st round
Mar 2019

Fieldwork
meetings
2nd round
May 2019

Audit complete
Jul 2019

Survey

Fieldwork

Reporting

Auditee “declines” to be audited Jul 2018

Pilot program proposed
start date Jan 2020
Takeaways

• Multiple paths to impact
• Benefits of collaborative approach
• Think long term
How to stay flexible

• Focus on what you can do
• Split up or provide additional products
• Proactive communication to avoid situations that demand flexibility
• Keep impact at forefront
Thank you

Questions?