



Hamilton

Office of the City Auditor

Accessible Transportation Services (ATS) Eligibility Audit

RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSES

December 7, 2020

The following 14 recommendations will strengthen controls, increase process efficiencies and help identify cost saving opportunities in order to ensure eligible residents who need accessible transportation services receive it:

Recommendation 1

We recommend that management use the third-party evaluator's results, municipal benchmarking and their own experiences to evaluate and potentially redesign the eligibility assessment process.

Management Response

Agreed. ATS will develop an operational plan (subject to budgetary/resource approvals) to further investigate the differing third-party assessment outcomes and conduct municipal benchmarking. The purpose of the operational plan is to conduct an in-depth assessment of the Lifemark results, review and evaluate the current design, and identify redesign options for an eligibility assessment process.

Anticipated completion date (operational plan): Q2 2022.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that management update the application form by adopting the following: guiding principles, functional ability, conventional transit accessibility features, test results, travel distance, personal care attendant, health care provider's eligibility option, and health care provider's review of the applicant's response.

Management Response

Agreed. ATS will develop a project plan to review the application form and identify immediate, medium, and longer-term improvements. The goal is to improve the effectiveness of the application, address strategic information gaps and optimize the application process.

Anticipated completion date (immediate improvements and project plan): Q2 2021.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that standard operating procedures and assessment guidelines be created for all assessment processes. These procedures may include instructions and evaluation strategies to assist staff in making consistent and supported eligibility decisions.

Management Response

Agreed. The standard operating procedures and assessment guidelines will be in alignment with the development of a redesigned process in recommendation #1.

Anticipated completion date: Q2 2022 (with standard operational procedures to follow).

Recommendation 4

We recommend that management implement a quality control process where all eligibility decisions are reviewed for accuracy and approved by someone with adequate expertise and experience before results are communicated to applicants. Review objectives may also include ensuring timely management of client information.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. The development of a quality control process will be implemented as an interim measure while the eligibility assessment process is reviewed and redesigned in recommendation #1.

Anticipated implementation date: Q2 2021.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that management incorporate more in-person contact into the eligibility assessment process within the next year.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will incorporate more in-person contact into the eligibility assessment process.

Anticipated implementation date: Q2 2021.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that management assess the need for strengthening the professional qualifications and experience required for making eligibility determinations.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will include an assessment of the professional qualifications and experience required to make effective eligibility determinations in the operational plan to redesign the eligibility process in recommendation #1.

Anticipated completion date (operational plan): Q2 2022 (with qualification assessment to follow).

Recommendation 7

We recommend that management prepare a business case outlining the costs and benefits of reassessing all existing clients.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will develop a business case to assess the costs and benefits of reassessing all existing clients and alternative options.

Anticipated completion date (business case): Q2 2021 (with implementation to follow).

Recommendation 8

We recommend that management explore the feasibility, potential savings, costs and benefits of the following service options: expanded Taxi Scrip Program, integrated service model, expanded travel training, shuttles and community buses.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will develop a business case to assess the costs and benefits of reassessing all existing clients and alternative options.

Anticipated completion date (business case): Q2 2021 (with implementation to follow).

Recommendation 9

We recommend that management enhance which assessment and eligibility data is captured in Trapeze for current and future strategic purposes, including historical application information and the limiting factor that contributed most to the eligibility decision.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will develop a business case to review and assess the eligibility data captured in Trapeze to enhance the data collected and stored.

Anticipated completion date (business case): Q3 2021 (with implementation to follow).

Recommendation 10

We recommend that a report library be created in Trapeze containing standard and frequently used reports that have been tested and validated for accuracy for more efficient data analysis.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will develop a business case to investigate the report library options with the goal of creating standard, accurate, valid reports that enable efficient data analysis.

Anticipated completion date (business case): Q3 2021 (with implementation to follow).

Recommendation 11

We recommend that management re-evaluate funds spent on travel training services to ensure that value for money is being obtained.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. The Travel Training program has been suspended since May 2020 (due to COVID) and the terms are being redrafted.

Anticipated completion date: Q2 2021

Recommendation 12

We recommend that ATS maintain a record of clients sent for functional assessment and use this to validate invoices received for payment.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. All functional assessments are suspended (due to COVID). The process to validate invoices will be established.

Anticipated implementation date: Q4 2020.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that management create performance metrics to measure process efficiencies and community impact and report on these regularly.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. The definition of performance metrics will be an added element in the development of the operational plan in recommendation #1. The optimization of the new metrics will be monitored through the existing performance measurement methodology via the divisional balanced scorecard.

Anticipated completion date (operational plan): Q2 2022 (with implementation to follow).

Recommendation 14

We recommend that management address the administrative issues identified by:

- Ensuring adequate document is kept about differences between the eligibility recommendation of the functional assessment provider and ATS' final eligibility decision;
- Reviewing Trapeze status codes at least annually and investigate the state of pending applications;
- Ensuring staff only accept completed current versions of the application form;
- Creating a separate, shortened application for long term care and nursing home applicants that obtains more information from their health care provider;
- Exploring how to use technology to track Taxi Scrip sales in a timelier manner and providing sales locations with access to up-to-date client sales records; and
- Evaluating and potentially redesigning the application appeal process.

**Management
Response**

Agreed. ATS will develop a workplan to assess the feasibility and address the administrative issues identified.

Anticipated completion date (workplan): Q1 2021 (with implementation to follow).

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