



**Animal Services
Microchip Program Review
P2019-05**

Issued by the
Internal Audit Office
April 23, 2019



Internal Audit Office

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DATE: April 23, 2019

TO: Paula J. Powell, Director of Animal Services

FROM: Edmundo S. Calderon, CIA, CGAP, CRMA, Chief Internal Auditor

SUBJECT: Animal Services Microchip Program Review

The Internal Audit Office has completed its assessment of the Animal Services Microchip Program. This engagement was accepted based on the engagement's potential to improve management of risks, add value, and/or improve the organization's operations (IIA 2010.C1). The work performed does not constitute an audit conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAS 2.12). The observations and conclusions that are reported in this Memorandum do not require Management Responses.

Background:

A microchip implant is a permanent method of electronic identification. The chip itself is very small, about the size of a grain of rice. The microchip is implanted subcutaneously (just under the skin) between the shoulder blades at the back of the animal's neck. Each chip has a unique number, which is detected using a microchip scanner. The microchip number is recorded on a microchip database registry with details about the animal and owner. There are approximately 8-10 different animal registries in the country.

Objectives:

The objectives of this assessment were to:

- Evaluate the Microchip Program for opportunities for improvement,
- Review the Microchip Program's Policies and Procedures,
- Assess the process followed to return animals to owners,
- Verify the number of animals that were microchipped, and
- Verify the number of animals that were reunited with their owners.

Scope:

December 2018 – February 2019.

Our assessment of the Microchip Program identified three (3) observations. The following is a description of the observations.

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**City of El Paso
Internal Audit Office
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OBSERVATION 1

Microchip Program Policies and Procedures

City of El Paso Strategic Plan

- Goal 6.13 *Maintain systems integrity, compliance, and business continuity.*

Best business practices state:

A strong system of internal controls requires that Policies and Procedures are written by management to establish criteria for executing routine or repetitive activities followed by an organization. The development and use of Policies and Procedures are an integral part of a successful quality system as it provides employees with the information and guidance to perform a job properly.

The Animal Services Department does not have a comprehensive set of Policies and Procedures for the Microchip Program. A General Order (GO) for Microchip Accountability dated February 19, 2019 was created; however, this GO provides a high overview of the Microchip Program. This GO can be used as a starting point to help create the Microchip Program Policies and Procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

The Animal Services Department should develop comprehensive set of Policies and Procedures for the Microchip Program. Once developed, the Policies and Procedures should be made available to all Animal Services employees.

OBSERVATION 2

New Microchips

City of El Paso Strategic Plan

- Goal 8.3 *Enhance animal services to ensure El Paso's pets are provided a safe and healthy environment.*

The Animal Services Department is actively conducting public outreach to spread the word on the importance of microchipping animals. The Animal Services Department microchips every animal it comes into contact at no charge unless the animal has already been microchipped. Microchips have helped reunite hundreds of pets with their owners. Of course, in order for the microchip to work the microchip needs to be registered with the manufacturer. The following new microchips were implanted for the months of December 2018 – February 2019.

Month/Year	New Microchips Implanted	Total Animal Intake	% of New Microchips Implanted
December 2018	1,117	1,810	62%
January 2019	1,275	1,903	67%
February 2019	973	1,700	57%

RECOMMENDATION

The Animal Services Department should continue:

- Conducting public outreach to spread the word on the importance of microchipping animals.
- Microchipping every animal it comes into contact with unless the animal has already been microchipped.

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OBSERVATION 3

Return to Owner Process

City of El Paso Strategic Plan

- Goal 8.3 *Enhance animal services to ensure El Paso's pets are provided a safe and healthy environment.*

A Return to Owner (RTO) process has been established to aid with returning animals to their owners. The Animal Services Department is collaborating with the El Paso Fire Department to help with microchip scans in order to return animals to their owners. The RTO Rates for the months of December 2018 – February 2019 are as follows:

Month/Year	RTO Rate *
December 2018	20%
January 2019	22%
February 2019	19%

* This percentage includes both city and county impounded animals.

RECOMMENDATION

The Animal Services Department should continue practicing the established RTO process to aid in returning microchipped animals to their owners.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the Animal Services Department has developed an effective Microchip Program. The Animal Services staff conduct extensive research on multiple databases to find the owners for microchipped animals. For the months of December 2018 – February 2019, 1,111 microchipped animals were reunited with their owners. Animal Services staff are committed to ensuring animals are returned to their owners.

The results of our assessment identified that the Microchip Program met the objectives in the following areas:

- Microchipping all animals entering the Animal Shelter, unless the animal is already microchipped.
- Establishing an effective and efficient Return to Owner Process.

The results of our assessment identified one area where the Microchip Program can improve:

- Developing a comprehensive set of Policies and Procedures for the Microchip Program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 212-1365.

cc: Financial Oversight and Audit Committee

Tomas Gonzalez, City Manager

Dionne L. Mack, Deputy City Manager Public Safety & Support Services

Robert Cortinas, Chief Financial Officer

Mario M. D'Agostino, Fire Chief