



Environmental Health  
Services Division



Fiscal Year  
**2017 ANNUAL  
REPORT**





## Environmental Health Services Division Fiscal Year 2017 Report



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Environmental Health Services Division  
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## Letter from the Assistant Director



*Don Hastings, Assistant Director, Environmental Health Services Division of the Austin Public Health Department.*

**Welcome** to the 2017 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 the Austin Public Health Department; 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.

Our **Consumer Health Program** enforces public health and environmental laws and regulations, which include, but are not limited to food safety protection, custodial care inspections, and enforcement of public smoking laws. The Consumer Health team places great emphasis on preventing and investigating food-borne illnesses in both the workplace and the community.

The **Travis County Environmental Health Program** performs inspections and investigates complaints relating to various state laws and local codes in all unincorporated areas of Travis County and within the communities of Bee Cave, Lakeway, Manor, Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, Volente, Westlake Hills and San Leanna. This group inspects restaurants, grocery stores, food manufacturers and custodial care facility foodservice. In addition, this team investigates general environmental complaints involving improper disposal of solid waste, high grass and weeds, animal pens, junk and abandoned vehicles, substandard buildings, and other public health nuisances; and, permits/ inspects pools and spas.

## NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Since May of 2017, Don Hastings has served as EHSD's new Assistant Director, succeeding former AD David Lopez upon his retirement.

Don is a local government professional with over 28 years of executive, management and supervisory experience at the municipal, county and regional levels.

Prior to his appointment as EHS AD, Don served as Chief Administrative Officer for Austin Public Health. Prior to Austin, Don served as 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 EHS 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 **Special Permitting Program** inspects mobile food units, temporary food events (e.g. special events), farmers' market booths, and a routine food district. They ensure the food safety of mobile food units such as food trailers, motor vehicles, pushcarts, and kiosks. The temporary food program ensures the food safety of all temporary event booths that serve food or beverages at thousands of special events every year. The farmers' market program ensures the food safety of food booths participating at a certified farmers' market.

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.

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.

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.

The **EHSD Building Plan Review and One-Time Inspections** staff review and approve food establishment and public swimming pool plans for new construction, remodels, revisions to approved permits, change of uses and certificate of occupancy/compliance.

Our 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 2017, EHSD focused on **two key initiatives** that will significantly improve inspection productivity, operational efficiency and customer service: The launching of Digital Health Department, a real-time, web-based inspection reporting and online application & payment system; and the completion of a comprehensive Business Process Improvement initiative. Both initiatives are expected to greatly improve customer service and operational efficiencies.

In upcoming FY2018, EHSD's key priorities will be to implement the core modules of Digital Health Department, and continue implementation of the Division's Business Process Improvement initiative.

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

**Have a safe and healthy 2018!**

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 City of Austin/Travis County Health Authority and Medical Director Philip Huang, M.D. EHSD is led by Assistant Director Don Hastings under the direction of Stephanie Hayden, Interim 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 2017 has seen some significant issues addressed and achievements made by the Environmental Health Services Division:

- **Hurricane Harvey Emergency Response Assistance.** Environmental Health Services Division joined the department's public health emergency response efforts to Hurricane Harvey. Our primary function in Harvey Response was to ensure food safety and sanitary environmental conditions for local shelter operations. Environmental Health Officers formed a strike team and completed two inspections daily for multiple shelters.
- **Fire Inspections for Travis County Mobile Vending Units.** Environmental Health Services Division worked closely with the Travis County Fire Marshal's Office to establish a new fire inspection protocol to insure public health and safety in the operation of mobile food units operating in Travis County.
- **Response to Zika and Mosquito-Borne Disease Threats.** In an effort to prepare for new and emerging diseases, the Environmental Vector Control Program was able to take advantage of federal grant funding to expand mosquito surveillance with new traps designed specifically for the species which may carry the Zika virus.
- **Austin's Annual Events and Festivals.** The Division has once again successfully navigated our high demand annual events; inspecting more than 3,500 individual food booths at 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.

Early in 2017, the Environmental Health Services Division successfully undertook a **comprehensive business process improvement project** that included an organizational audit, environmental scan, employee-based SWOT exercise, organizational strategic plan, and process re-tooling. To-date, this project has involved the review and revision of EHSD policies, procedures, business practices and activity levels; and, the formulation of new productivity metrics for inspections. The result has been strengthened teamwork and focused business planning that will enable EHSD to fulfill its consumer and environmental health mission at ever higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Another milestone achieved by EHSD in 2017 was to **launch Digital Health Department (DHD)-- a new real-time inspection reporting and online payment system**. DHD will for the first time enable EHSD to conduct real time, web-based inspection reporting. Very importantly, DHD will also provide for on-line application submittal and on-line payment—taking EHSD’s customer service and operational efficiency to the next level.

EHSD continues to make 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 e-cigarette ordinance) and enhanced communications through a quarterly newsletter and topic-specific emails to our 10,000+ customers.

Throughout 2018, the Environmental Health Services Division will continue to provide public health and safety protection for the citizens of Austin and Travis County, whether that is through investigating a food borne illness outbreak, responding to a sewage spill, reducing mosquito breeding areas or preventing an accidental drowning. The EHSD team looks forward to meeting the challenges of a new year!



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

## Budget Report



The 2017 Fiscal Year Budget Current Year Estimate (CYE) is \$5,813,456 for expenditures and \$4,717,088 in revenues see Table 1 and 2. Revenue collected by EHSD for the fiscal year was \$4,895,266 or 103.8% of the Amended CYE. EHSD expenditures came in at 99% of budget.

Table 1. Revenue

Unit or Program	Adjusted	Actual	Percent of CYE
Consumer Protection	\$3,779,793	\$3,957,901	104.7%
Food Re-inspection Clearances	\$134,110	\$117,847	87.9%
Customer Service	\$ 221,451	\$ 219,383	99.1%
Swimming Pool Permits	\$ 439,105	\$ 378,015	86.1%
Swimming Pool Re-inspection	\$46,559	\$96,675	207.6%
Special Food Permitting	\$ 96,070	\$ 125,445	130.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,717,088</b>	<b>\$4,895,266</b>	<b>103.8%</b>

Table 2. Expenditures

Unit or Program	Adjusted	Year End	Percent of CYE
Consumer Protection	\$2,357,784	\$ 2,320,666	98.4%
Administration	\$1,308,209	\$1,276,938	97.6%
Compliance	\$86,018	\$86,062	100.1%
Travis County and Other Jurisdictions	\$499,888	\$494,745	99.0%
Research Analysis	\$95,433	\$95,328	99.9%
Environmental and Vector Control	\$593,995	\$593,521	99.9%
Special Permitting Unit	\$561,288	\$576,422	102.7%
One Stop Shop	\$310,841	\$330,362	106.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,813,456</b>	<b>\$5,774,044</b>	<b>99.3%</b>

## Program Summaries

### Consumer Health

The division’s Consumer Health Program performs food service enterprise inspections and investigates citizen-based food complaints, foodborne illness investigations, 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’s Code of Ordinances. Twenty Environmental Health Officers inspect approximately 5,650 food service enterprises, including: restaurants, grocery stores, retail gas stations, food manufacturers, daycare centers, retirement homes, and hospitals. Our division performs annual inspections of day care centers, and inspections for homes that provide foster care or adoption.



*Kyle Walker, Registered Sanitarian, taking food temperatures during a routine inspection.*

The City of Austin is divided into 20 inspection districts consisting of approximately 250 establishments. The division goals are that inspectors perform a minimum of two routine inspections of each establishment annually and investigate all citizen complaints within 72 hours. All incidence of foodborne illness are investigated in cooperation with the Epidemiology Unit based on severity and risk to the public’s health. The division maintains a 24/7 emergency response to public health hazards.

The Consumer Health Program conducted 58 foodborne illness investigations in fiscal year 2017.

In an effort to maintain food inspection consistency, the Consumer Health Program is continuing to standardize all Inspectors. The Standardization program promotes knowledge and expertise in their understanding, application, and interpretation of the regulations. Currently 85.7% of our health officer staff have been standardized.

Table 3. Select Performance Measures in the City of Austin	Fiscal Year 2017	Goal	Percent Achieved
Routine Inspections	9,558	10,200	93.7
Routine inspections with a score of 80% or greater	92	90	>100
Re-inspections <sup>1</sup>	1,727	1,400	>100

Data Source: MicroStrategy

<sup>1</sup> Re-inspections due to critical deficiencies observed at food establishments may include failing to have a Certified Food Manager Certificate, no hot water, or refrigeration units not working properly.

## Special Food Permitting

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 in District 8.

SPU is composed of six senior Environmental Health Officer positions covering City of Austin, Travis County, and contracted local municipalities. All inspectors, working in SPU, 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 Temporary Food Program ensures the food safety of temporary events, special festivals, or celebrations. During fiscal year 2017, SPU covered the Austin City Limits Festival, Formula 1, Star of Texas Rodeo, SXSW, Austin360 Amphitheater concerts and various other events. 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 focuses only on those vending machines that provide time or temperature controlled for safety foods. These self-service machines must provide plans indicating temperature measuring devices and automatic safety shutoff controls as part of their permitting process.

The Farmers Market Program verifies the food safety of food booths participating at certified farmers markets. The farmers market program currently inspects 23 farmers markets in the cities of Austin, Sunset Valley and Bee Cave.

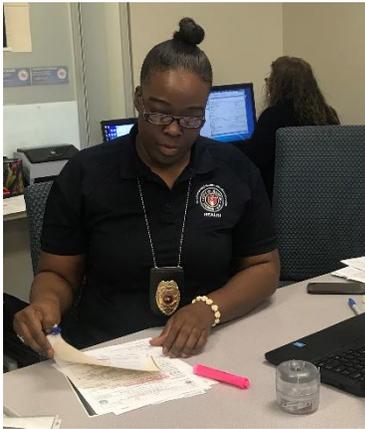
SPU has a goal of inspecting 60% of all temporary food booths. For this fiscal year, SPU fell slightly short and inspected 55% of all temporary food booths which is 92% of the goal. The performance measure for mobile food vending is to conduct 2,000 inspections. This past year, SPU surpassed that goal and conducted 2,016 mobile food vending unit inspections.

During fiscal year 2017, SPU collaborated with Austin Fire Department and Travis County Fire Marshal staff to create consistent inspections regardless of permitting jurisdiction. These efforts resulted in Travis County approving a fire inspection program for mobile food vendor units



*Michael Bland, Registered Sanitarian, issuing a permit in a mobile food vending unit.*

permitted in Travis County. Ultimately providing safety measures to the county that encompass both food and fire safety.



*Olympia Ellison, R.S. and Mimi Rodriguez, Customer Service Representative Senior, processing mobile food vendor permits.*

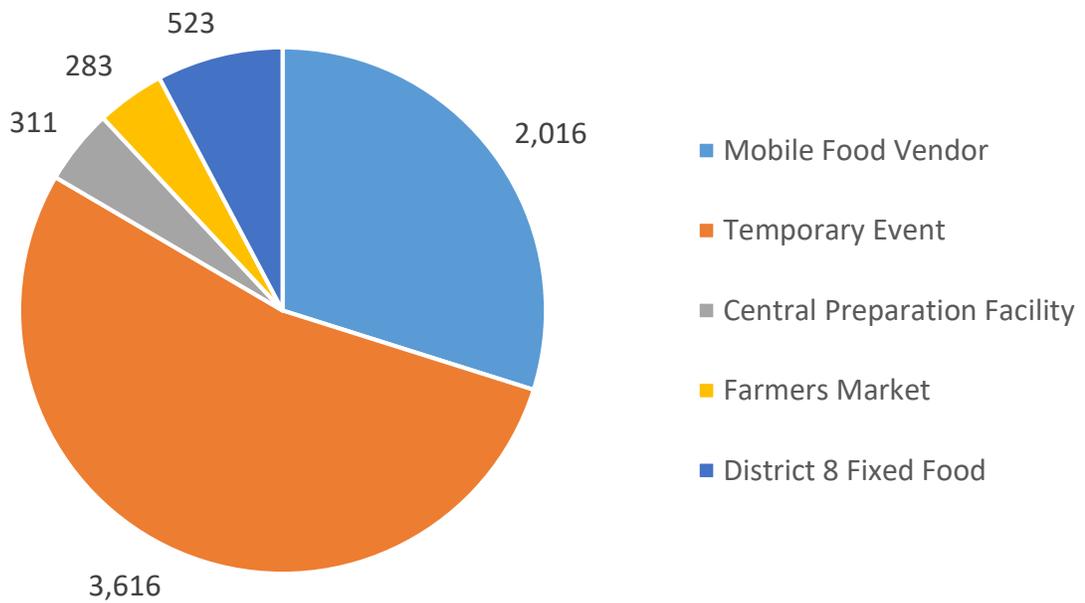


*Anthony Sandoval, R.S. performs a sanitizer concentration test using chlorine test paper in a ware wash sink.*



*Danny Hawbaker, R.S. inspecting a soda fountain spout for mold.*

Figure 1. Inspection Activities Completed by the Special Permitting Unit in Fiscal Year 2017



## Travis County and Other Jurisdictions

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 day care inspections.



*Arlene Johnson, Environmental Health Officer I, responding to a public health nuisance complaint.*

These inspectors complete environmental health area surveillance, public nuisance complaints and general sanitation assessments. The intention of these duties is to identify and gain voluntary compliance with issues like high grass and weeds, litter or rubbish, standing water, exposed sewage and wastewater, abandoned or junk vehicles, and substandard structures. All of which can pose a public health threat. These environments are conducive to rodent or insect infestation, and stagnant water which can all 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.

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

Type of Inspection	Number Completed
Environmental Health	151
Food	1,340
Pool and Spa	203
Total Completed	1,694

## Environmental Vector Control



*Khanh Le, Registered Sanitarian reading chemical results from pool sample during an inspection.*

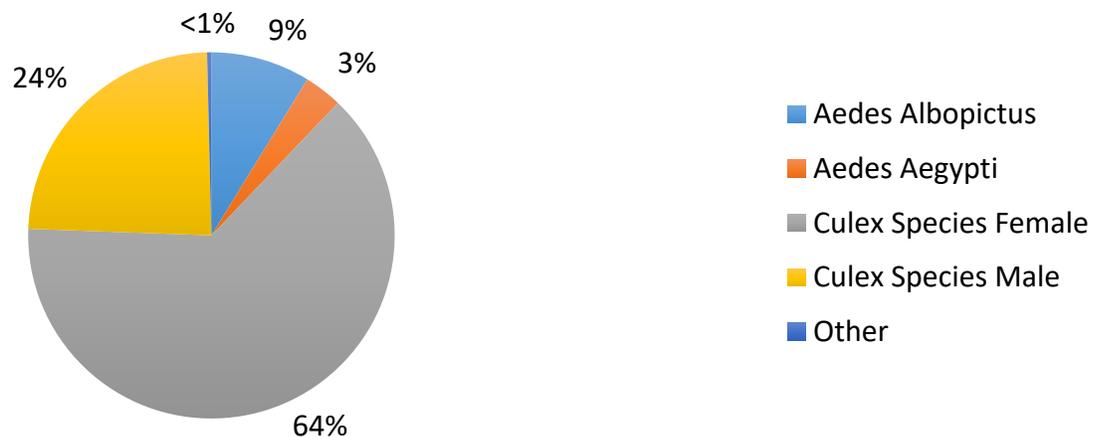
The Environmental Vector Control Program is responsible for routine inspections of public pools and spas, conducting mosquito and rodent site assessments, investigating complaints regarding animal enclosures and coordinating outreach activities for the Division. The program is comprised of six full-time 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 2017 was to have 90% of public pools maintain compliance with the regulations. This year 80.3% compliance was reached. The shortage may be a result of the implementation of a more comprehensive inspection.

In collaboration with the Austin Apartment Association and other key stakeholders in the community, the format of the pool inspection report was changed in fiscal year 2017 to improve application of the swimming pool code and education to pool operators. This change yielded a more comprehensive inspection so as to better advise existing and prospective new owners of any deficiencies in need of correcting.

The Mosquito surveillance program follows an integrated mosquito management (IMM) approach. This approach focuses on conducting site assessments, mosquito surveillance, public education, application of control measure and rating evaluation of control measure effectiveness, and includes an ability to change the program as needed. Mosquito breeding and activity are dependent upon weather (rain, flooding, drought, temperature and wind), drainage, vegetation, and an accumulation of debris.

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



Data Source: Mosquito Sample Analysis Spreadsheet

Inspectors routinely drive assigned areas looking for stagnant water. These locations will be evaluated for the presence of mosquito larvae and their natural predators. A 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 this mosquito season, over 680 traps were sent to the state for testing, resulting in one positive mosquito pool for West Nile Virus in Austin and Travis County.

The use of adulticide (mosquito spraying) is not part of the routine IMM. It has not been found to be the best control of mosquito exposure or reduction of mosquito breeding sites. However, adulticiding may be applied when the Health Authority deems necessary.



*Angela Ortiz, Registered Sanitarian holding the contents of her mosquito trap.*

In the last few years, new diseases circulating among mosquitos, including the Zika Virus and Chikungunya, have the program exploring the use of different types of control measures and surveillance techniques. The use of mosquito traps having 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.

Rodent site assessments are designed to assist owner-occupied properties in locating rodent entry points. EHO's provide tips on how to identify and eliminate rodent entry points, hand out glue boards and snap traps with instructions for use, and may bait for rodents.

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.



*Kera Bell, Environmental Health Officer I, representing EHSD at an outreach event.*

## One Stop Shop



*Matt Dowd, Registered Sanitarian and Mark Churilla, Registered Sanitarian reviewing architectural plans to ensure this structure meets food safety laws.*

The Environmental Health One Stop Shop (OSS) Program operates at the Development Services Department with other departments from across the City of Austin. The purpose is to provide a centralized location for builders and planners to permit their projects. The Division's OSS program represents environmental and public health functions and is comprised of four Senior Environmental Health Officers. These inspectors play a crucial role in protecting public establishments, public swimming pools and spa facilities are in full compliance with local and state health codes prior to permitting. The OSS inspectors conduct plan reviews and inspections for the City of Austin.

Table 5. One Stop Shop Inspection Activities for Fiscal Year 2017

Inspection Activity	Type	Sub Type	Number	Total
Certificate of Occupancy		Food	593	713
		Pool or Spa	120	
		Sub Total		
Change of Ownership		Food	680	896
		Pool or Spa	216	
		Sub Total		
Plan Review	New	Food	313	378
		Pool or Spa	65	
		Sub Total		
	Remodel	Food	111	112
		Pool or Spa	1	
		Sub Total		
<b>Total</b>				<b>2,099</b>

## Customer Service

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. These staff strive to provide a positive customer service experience that includes assisting customers with information related to all of the programs under EHSD.

EHSD Customer Service Representatives resolve internal and external customer inquiries and complaints. The staff promotes an emphasis on customer satisfaction and the importance of responding courteously and promptly to all customers.

<b>Table 6. Number of Customer Service Activities by Type for All Jurisdictions Served</b>	<b>Number</b>
Walk IN Customers	13,214
Electronic Mail	9,538
Incoming Phone	26,011
Incoming Mail	7,718
Public Information Requests	1,009

Data Source: Monthly Manual Spreadsheet and AVAYA Phone Report

The cashier functions of EHSD includes balancing and preparing daily reports of revenue totaling over \$4,990,000 a year. The most critical responsibility is to ensure all transactions are posted accurately to customer accounts by close of business each day.

<b>Table 7. Applications and Requests Processed in Fiscal Year 2017</b>	<b>Number</b>
Food Service Permits	7,770
Pool and Spa Permits	2,223
Food and Pool Re-Inspections	1,769
Mobile Vending Permits	1,421
Temporary Event Permits	7,668
Farmers Market Permits	224
Food Manager Registrations	4,506
Custodial Care Inspections	623
Total	26,204

Data Source: MicroStrategy

The CSRs perform record management duties. Our continuing efforts to become 100% paperless have reduced the volume of applications and additional documents to be filed.

Customer Service provides support to a staff of 40 professional Environmental Health Officers and Supervisors in their efforts to minimize and correct environmental health and safety hazards. Assignments include administrative support, timekeeping, Public Information Requests, citizen requests, city and county management queries, and purchasing.

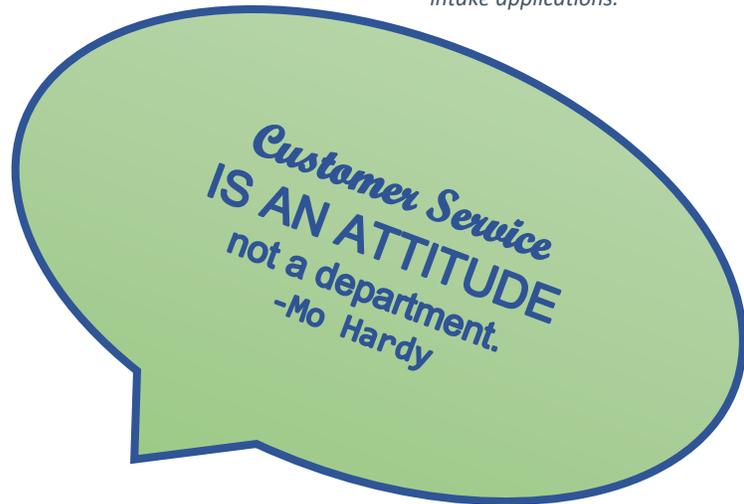
After data analysis of customer dropped calls and in effort to reduce dropped calls, EHS restructured customer phone experience. Customers are now routed to the next available customer service staff when they select to speak to a customer service representative. This has resulted in a reduction in the amount of time a customer spends on hold.



*Jose Castelan, Customer Service Representative Senior, processing intake applications.*



*Jaime Martinez, Customer Service Representative, and Gricelda Diaz, Customer Service Representative, review documents for completion.*



*Denise Estrada, Customer Solutions Coordinator, meeting with Don Hastings, Assistant Director, to discuss organizational changes in EHSD.*



*Jennifer Drummond, Customer Service Representative Senior, and Bobby Morales, Customer Service Representative Senior, working the cashier's office.*

## Enforcement Action Summary



*Karina Moore, Code Review Analyst, attending court and representing EHSD in cases filed.*

The lead role and responsibility of the Code Review Analyst is to file criminal charges by drafting Probable Cause Affidavits for health code violations based 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 Officer. Once the affidavits are completed, the Code Review Analyst 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 Code Review Analyst is involved in the judicial process by working with prosecutors to come to an agreeable solution. The Code Review

Analyst 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 \$7,389 in legal penalties.

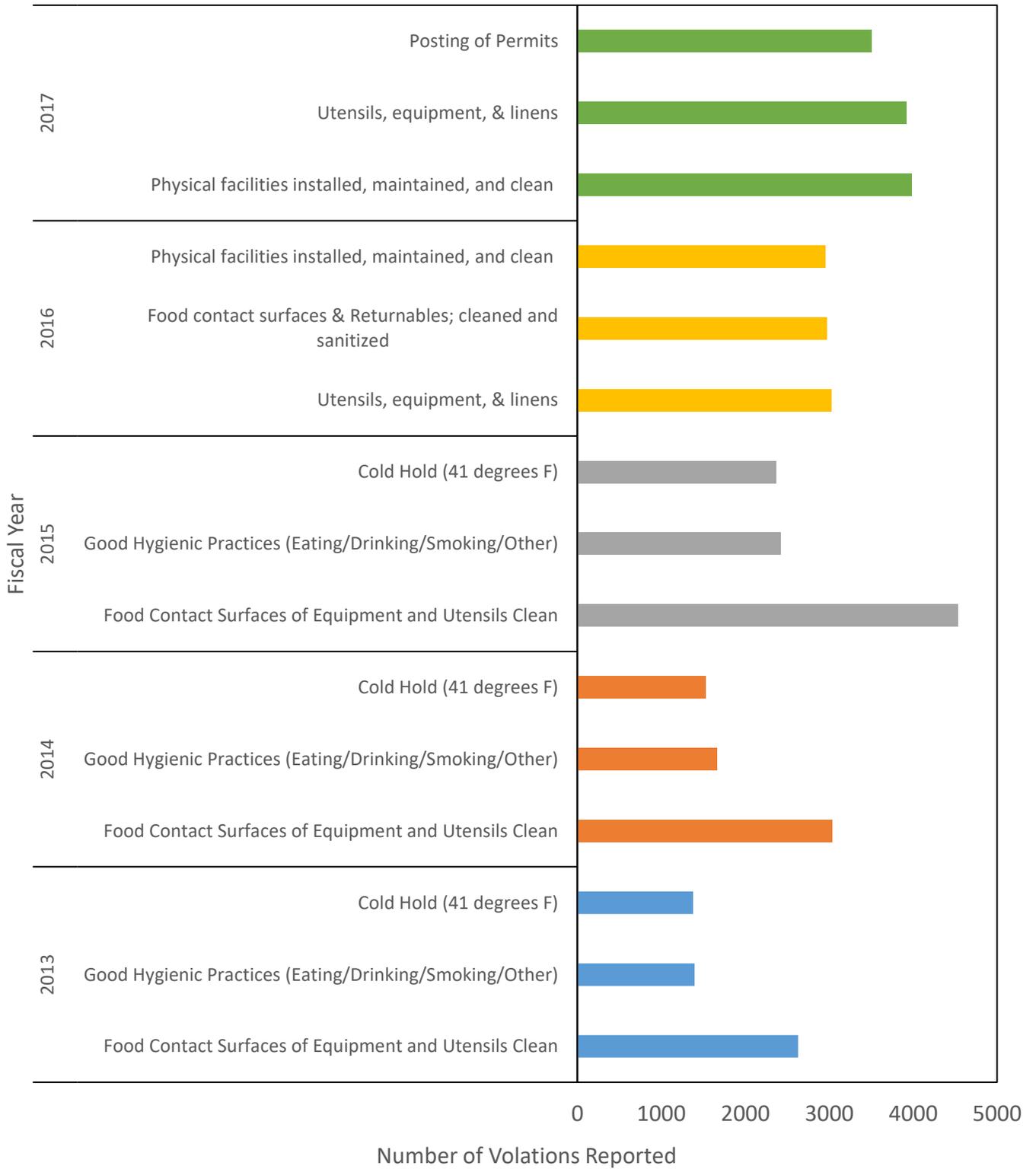
Table 8. Type of Cases Filed by Jurisdiction in Fiscal Year 2017

Type	City of Austin	Travis County
No Food Permit	22	4
No Food Manager	9	Not Applicable
Unsafe Foods	10	Not Applicable
SIPPO	3	Not Applicable
Pools	3	0
Equipment Hold Order	4	Not Applicable
Animal Enclosures	1	Not Applicable
Public Nuisance Includes: rubbish, refuse, junked vehicles, tall weeds and grass	Not Applicable	24
Total	52	28

Data Source: OMNIS

## Trend Analysis and Summary

Figure 3. Top Three Fixed Food Violations Reported by Fiscal Year





Please interpret Figure 3 with caution. The Texas Food Establishment Rules (TFER) was updated and consequently inspection tools changed in October of 2015. Data in fiscal year 2015 and prior can be compared and data after fiscal year 2015 can be compared but data is not comparable before and after the rule changes. For example, the violation of food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils clean became two distinct violations after the rule changes. Good hygienic practices was 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. Lower risk violations can be linked to higher risk violations, like building blocks increasing the threat to public health.

Priority Item— (Items 1-20—Three point violation) Application of a provision from this chapter (TFER) that contributes directly to the elimination, prevention, or reduction of hazards associated with foodborne illness or injury to an acceptable level. There is no other provision that more directly controls the hazard. Includes items with a quantifiable measure to show control of hazards such as cooking, reheating, cooling, and handwashing.

Priority Foundation Item— (Items 21-33—Two point violation) A provision in this chapter (TFER) whose application supports, facilitates, or enables one or more priority items. Includes an item that requires the purposeful incorporation of specific actions, equipment or procedures by industry management to attain control of risk factors that contribute to foodborne illness or injury, for example: personnel training, infrastructure or necessary equipment, HACCP plans, documentation or record keeping, and labeling.

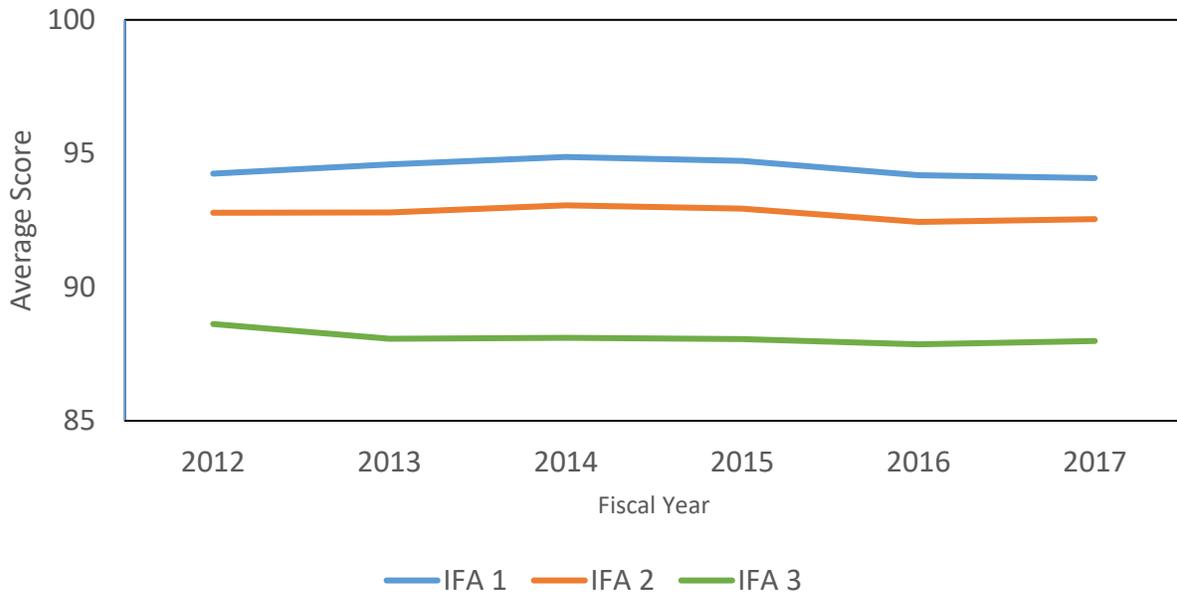
Core Item— (Items 34-47A—One point violation) A provision in this chapter (TFER) that is not designated as a Priority item or a Priority Foundation item and includes an item that usually relates to general sanitation, operational controls, sanitation operating procedures (SSOPs) facilities or structure, 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 3. In Fiscal Year 2017, the top three most reported violations are all Core Items. See table 9.

Table 9. Top Three Fixed Food Violations Reported in Fiscal Year 2017

Violation Number on Inspection Form	Violation Title	Number Reported
45 CORE	Physical facilities installed, maintained, and clean	3,986
39 CORE	Utensils, equipment, & linens; properly used, stored, dried, & handled	3,925
47 CORE	Posting of Permits	3,510

Figure 4. Average Score of Routine Inspections by Inspection Frequency Analysis (IFA) by Fiscal Year



As Figure 4 illustrates, the average routine inspection score according to risk has maintained relatively stable over the last six years even with the changes in the Texas Food Establishment Rules. For Fiscal Year 2017, the overall average score for all food establishment inspections was 91.5 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 2017, the average score is for IFA 1 is 94, IFA 2 is 92, and IFA 3 is 88.

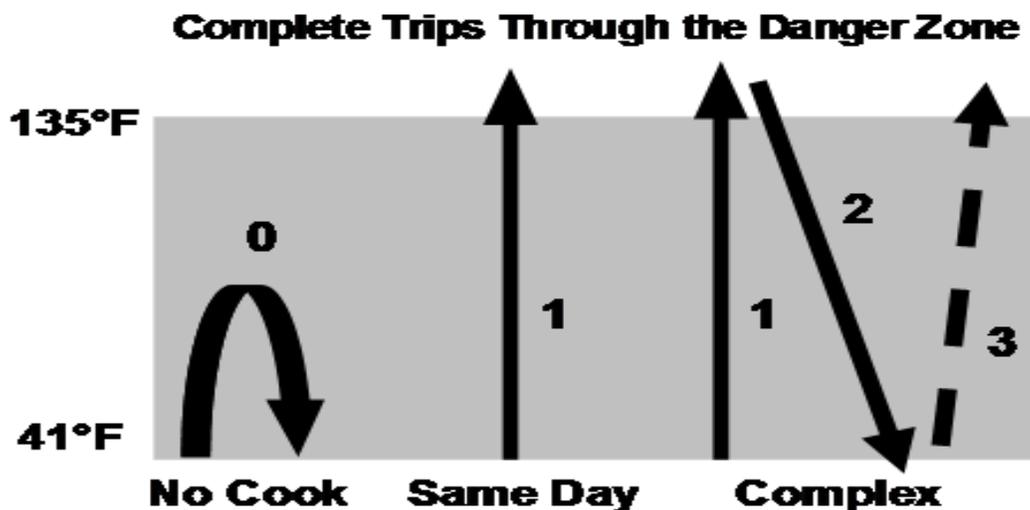
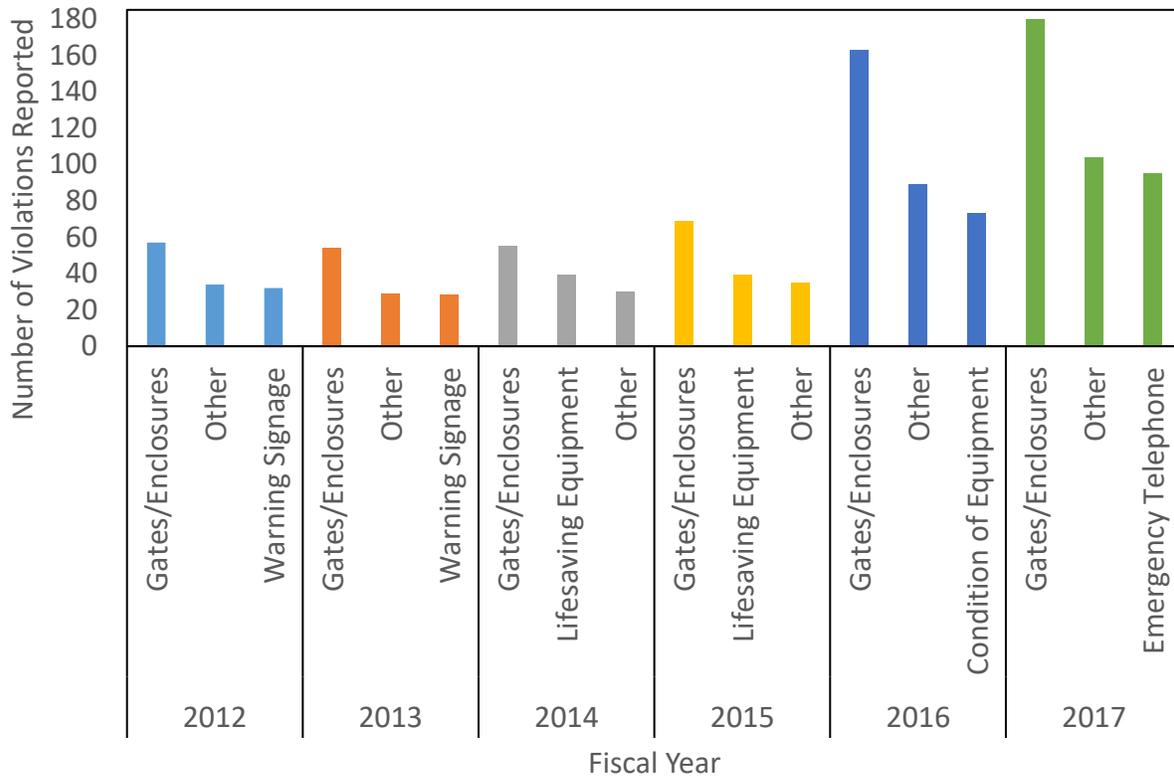


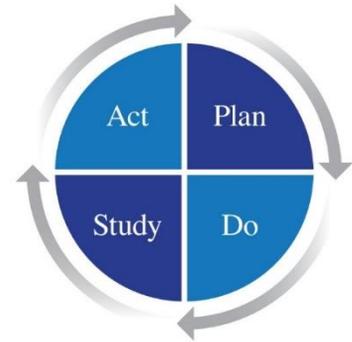
Figure 5. Top Three Reported Violations that Resulted in a Pool, Spa, or PWIFF Closure by Fiscal Year



As shown in Figure 5, over the last 6 years gates and enclosures are the most frequently reported violation during a pool or spa inspection that resulted in a closure. Gates and enclosures are an important public health and safety measure. Pool enclosures are subject to different codes depending on the type of pool or spa and when it was built. However, regardless of the type of pool or spa or when it was constructed there are enclosure height requirements and requirements to all gates and/or doors. Excluding residential youth camps, pools and spas are required to have a minimum of 48-inch enclosure height. Aside from residential youth camps, gates and doors must be self-closing and self-latching and not propped open. The intent of these requirements is to prevent unintentional drownings by restricting access to small children without adult supervision.

## 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.

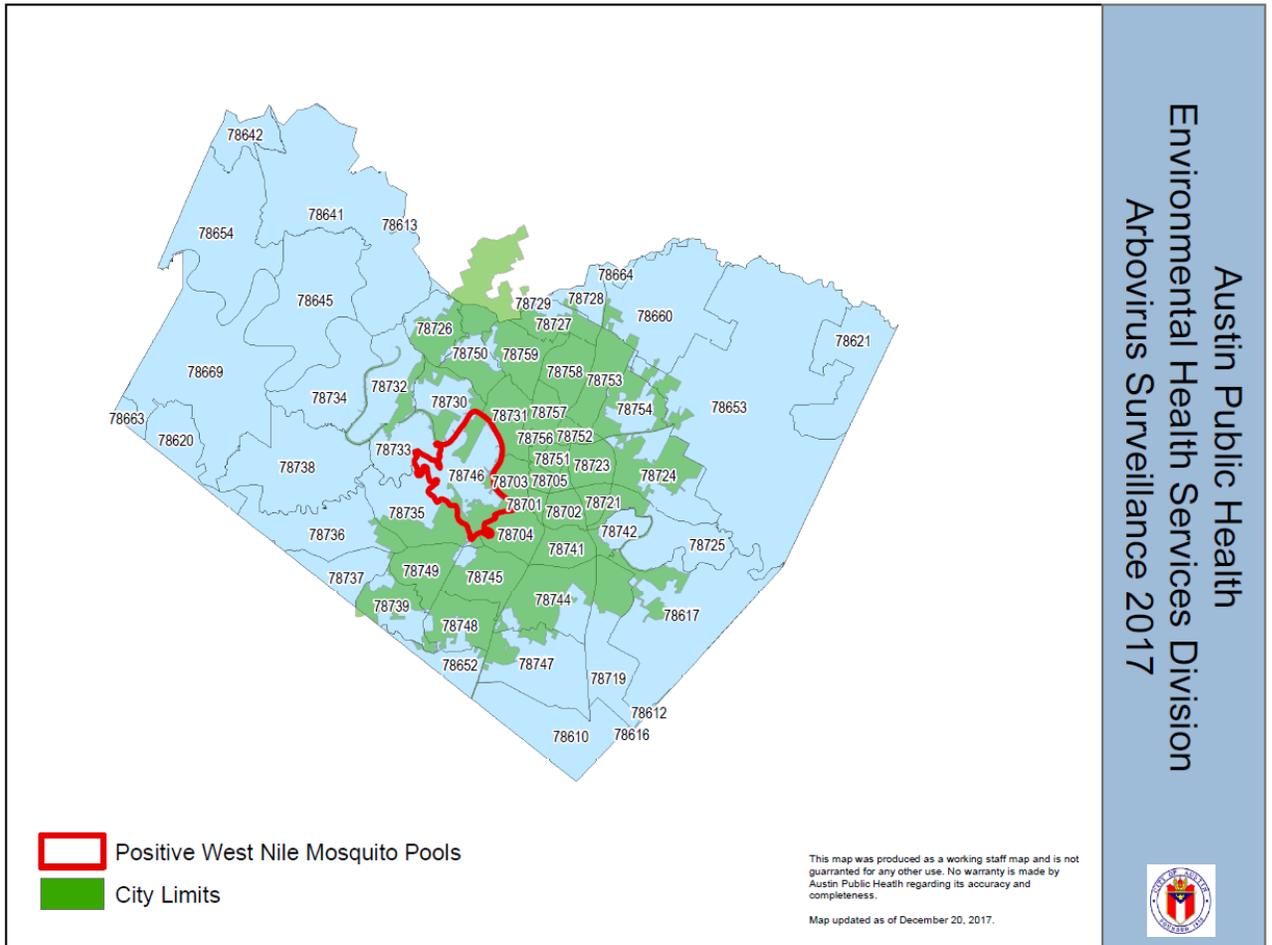


- This fiscal year, the division began a process to review approximately 240 policies and procedures to ensure that business practices are documented and current.
- Members of the SPU team initiated and facilitated discussions between Travis County Fire Marshal and Austin Fire Department that led a Memorandum of Understanding between the two. Efforts resulted in Fire and Electrical inspections in Travis County that had not been done before. The ultimate goal would be to protect public health and safety from mobile vending fire hazards.
- Management has made great strides to increase technical capabilities for staff in the field. During the budget cycle, a request was made to secure an updated database and hardware that will increase efficiency and time management. The Austin City Council approved the request for additional funds. Project has been initiated in Fiscal Year 2018.

EHSD continues to maintain and participate in the Department 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-Surveillance meetings, led by the Health Authority, as a best practice for communicating public health issues affecting multiple areas of the Department.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division Arbovirus Surveillance 2017 Map

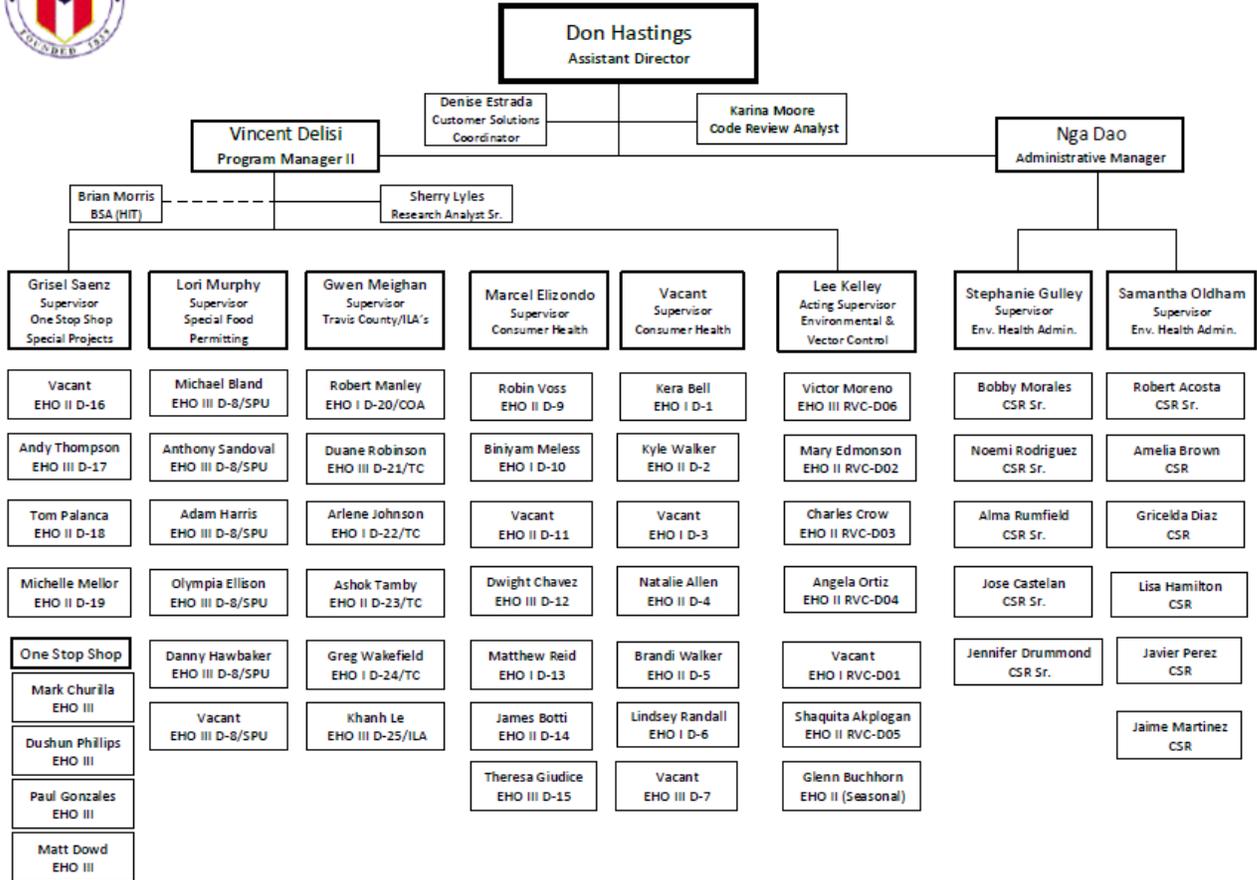


# Appendix B. Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division Organizational Chart



## Austin Public Health Environmental Health Services Division

2-7-2018





## Consumer Health Issue Brief

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

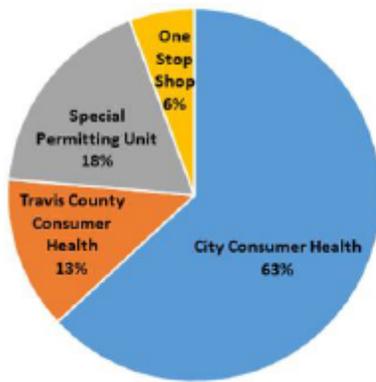
**Definition:** We are a regulatory program which enforces state and local food safety codes in all of Austin and Travis County’s food establishments.

### 1 Our Call to Action ...

1. To increase compliance with food safety regulations through inspection and investigation, ensuring a healthier community.
2. 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 ... FY 2018 General Fund \$3,828,913



**Who We Serve**

*All who live, work, eat, and play in Austin and Travis County*

- Visitors to Austin – 25.6 million/year\*
- Food industry owners and operators
- Day cares, nursing homes
- Hospitals and schools
- Summer food programs

**Where We Eat**

- Food Establishments (5,750)
- Mobile Food Trucks (1,250)
- Special Event Food booths (6,100)
- Farmers Market booths (250)

\*Downtown Austin Alliance

**Services Provided**

- Permitting
- Customer Service
- Regulatory inspections
- Compliance re-inspections
- Complaint investigations
- Foodborne Illness investigations
- One Stop Shop plan review and inspection
- Education and training
- Public health outreach

### 3 2017 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 92%
- Performance Measure - All Fixed food establishment routine inspections conducted. Goal 11,100; Actual 10,366 (93%)

#### By the Numbers...

- Regulatory inspections (all types) – 15,907
- Total Food Permits issued – 14,660
- Compliance re-inspections – 1,729
- Pre-opening inspections – 1,495
- Complaints investigated – 573
- Plan review and approval – 466
- Foodborne illness investigations – 58
- Court cases filed for non-compliance – 49
- Establishment permit suspensions or closures – 17

### 4 Community Impact ...

Foodborne Illness Investigations -

- Sick mother of twins delivered early as a consequence of a listeria infection, traced to a farmers market vendor.
- Elderly man dies from eating contaminated raw oysters at local seafood restaurant.



Summer Food Programs -

- Partnership with non-profit agencies to support food programs providing over 100,000 safe meals annually for the community.





