



## CITY OF ATLANTA

City Auditor's Office  
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# ***Performance Audit:***

## **Office of Code Compliance**

### ***Why We Did This Audit***

We undertook this audit because City Council members and code compliance staff have expressed a need for additional inspectors; the city has reduced the number of inspectors since fiscal year 2008 due to budget shortfalls. At the same time, increases in foreclosures and absentee property owners have added to the perception that the code compliance workload has increased. Residents and elected officials have expressed concern about the lack of code compliance and rising number of vacant and abandoned structures in the city.

### ***What We Recommended***

The Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Community Development should:

- Develop procedures on data collection and quality assurance to ensure data on new complaints is complete and accurate.
- Develop measures and workload data that can be captured electronically in its normal work flows.
- Organize its file room for historical cases and any paper files created for new cases.
- Develop job expectations for inspectors and supervisors that require inspectors to enter inspection results promptly and accurately.

The mayor's office staff should:

- Develop quality assurance procedures for departments' ATLStat submissions.

For more information regarding this report, please contact Stephanie Jackson at 404.330.6678 or [sjackson@atlantaga.gov](mailto:sjackson@atlantaga.gov).

### ***What We Found***

The Office of Code Compliance lacks reliable data to prioritize, track, and manage its code compliance complaints, measure its progress toward meeting performance standards, or determine staffing requirements. The office also lacks written procedures for calculating and reporting workload and performance data. As a result, the office has publicly reported data that overstated its performance and misrepresented the makeup of its complaints. Reports underestimated the time it took to complete first inspections, over counted the number of highly hazardous complaints, and over counted the number of complaints generated externally. Two previous directors instructed staff to enter the last day of the month for complaints that had not been inspected, which made inspections appear to occur sooner than they actually did. These directors no longer work for the city. Due to resource constraints, mayor's office staff does not routinely verify the accuracy of ATLStat data.

A lack of written procedures for compiling both hardcopy and electronic data has contributed to incomplete and inaccurate data. We noted discrepancies between hardcopy and electronic files, including missing information and different re-inspection and compliance dates. The hardcopy files are disorganized and incomplete.

The new Accela case management system was intended to streamline data collection and case management. However, data problems remain, in part because of unresolved system problems that the office identified both before and after the system went live and in part because of procedural problems. City staff accepted Accela and the historical data migrated from KIVA without adequate testing. Complaint data migrated from KIVA or entered into Accela are not entirely reliable.

City Council members have expressed the need to add code compliance inspectors. However, without reliable data, management is unable to accurately assess its staffing needs. Going forward, Accela should be able to provide needed workload and performance data if the office develops clear requirements and quality control procedures for capturing and entering data into the system.