

CITY OF GLENDALE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Yasmin K. Beers, City Manager
FROM: Elena Bolbolian, Director of Innovation, Performance & Audit (IPA)
RE: Weekly Report – March 20, 2020

COVID-19 Tips

The world has drastically changed in the last week in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This rapid change naturally causes uneasiness for most people. To help ease some of these feelings, here are 3 research-backed tips to maintain wellbeing and contribute to the community during this challenging time:



1. Thank grocery store workers, pharmacists, first responders or trash truck operators.
Why? Research shows practicing [gratitude](#) can improve mental health.
2. Help the vulnerable members of the community by making a [donation](#) to have fresh food made and delivered to them.
Why? Research shows that [giving](#) makes people feel happy.
3. Pick up the phone and call family and friends.
Why? Research links social [connections](#) to happiness and health.

Automated Testing Improves Internal Efficiencies

To improve efficiencies, Internal Audit uses data analytics software to automate certain test procedures in performing routine audit work.

For example, during the affordable housing lottery [audit](#), Internal Audit used software to **automate the review** of over 18,000 records to check for duplicate applications and to determine program eligibility. Conducting this type of line-by-line manual review would take a massive amount of time and be an inefficient use of staff resources. The ability to use data analytics software to automate the review of these 18,000+ records, **freed up time** for the auditors to focus on the anomalies identified by the software, which require further review.



Using data analytics allows IPA to analyze an entire population of data instead of just a sample, which is the traditional approach. This method, in turn reduces costs, improves accuracy, increases compliance and improves customer satisfaction.

City Hall Goes to Bootcamp

Glendale is one of 15 cities in North America participating in training through [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#). This unique training allows 12 City staff members from different operations to come together to solve challenges in new ways. The training is focused on design thinking, a creative problem solving technique widely used in the private sector, but new to government.

Earlier this month, Glendale's team of City Hall innovators attended bootcamp. Unlike fitness bootcamps that focus on physical strength, this training stretched mental muscles by introducing participants to new techniques such as human-centered design. Human-centered design uses insights gained from end users in solving problems faster and more creatively. Within government, the idea is to share challenges and **invite the community** to help define problems, then develop and test solutions. Incorporating input from the community early on allows for better solutions and more success in wide scale adoption of policies and programs.

For this training, the group is focusing on helping local commercial businesses understand the value of **organic waste recycling and reuse**. This is being done ahead of State regulation (SB 1383) that will soon require businesses and residents to divert organic waste from local landfills.

During bootcamp, the Bloomberg Coach guided the team through design thinking exercises, while also helping the group better frame their challenge and practice new research techniques. The bootcamp ended with field visits to commercial producers of organic waste, where the group practiced making field observations before coming back and reviewing their field data together. Once training ends, these staff members will be able to take the new techniques and apply them to challenges in their operations, thereby **spreading innovation**.

