

OVERVIEW

THE AUDITOR
STATE OF HAWAII

Audit of Custodial Services Programs of the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Judiciary, the Department of Education, and the University of Hawaii

Summary

Custodial services programs at state facilities directly affect state employees and members of the public. These services keep buildings clean and safe, as well as prevent their premature deterioration.

The majority of the State's custodial service programs are managed by the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Judiciary, the Department of Education, and the University of Hawaii. These four agencies employ more than 1,700 custodial staff who are responsible for 21 million square feet of space in state facilities. Over \$36 million is expended each year for custodial services and supplies.

This audit found that program managers have failed to consistently establish and use fundamental management controls. Specifically, this audit found that: 1) custodial services programs failed to adopt common cleanliness standards, leaving users with no assurance that the facilities are clean, 2) management failed to use such tools as custodial task lists, checklists, and inspection forms, resulting in incomplete attention to basic responsibilities, 3) custodial program managers have not established formal training programs, 4) program managers could better utilize custodial services cost data to manage and improve their programs, and 5) few custodial services managers belong to relevant professional organizations.

We surveyed 718 tenants of the four agencies. Seventy percent were satisfied but 30 percent were not. Comments were included by 160 respondents, such as: "I reported cat poop in the hall. It was never picked up. I have watched it get smaller and smaller over the months. It has been 6 months and the old withered poop is still there." Other comments included: "Office never vacuumed," "Sink has not been cleaned except by me the entire school year," "Litter remains in the stairwell for weeks," and others. One comment sums our conclusion: "It seems as if the quality of custodial services depends on who does the work."



Recommendations and Response

We recommend that the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Department of Education, the Judiciary, and the University of Hawaii each adopt a formal cleanliness standard for its custodial services program. In addition, each agency should develop procedures to ensure that this standard is applied to every unit served by its respective custodial program.

We also recommend that all four agencies ensure that custodial service managers use task lists, checklists, and formal inspections to monitor and measure the completion of custodial tasks. The task lists should be distributed to building users.

We recommend that the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Judiciary, and the University of Hawaii each develop formal training programs to identify and develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of custodial workers.

We recommend that all four agencies each use custodial cost data to assess the cost effectiveness of resources used and to compare alternative service delivery methods.

We recommend that the Department of Accounting and General Services, the Judiciary, and the University of Hawaii each ensure that custodial program managers belong to relevant professional organizations to help managers obtain current information on custodial services.

The Department of Accounting and General Services concurs with the findings and recommendations. The department states that recent reductions in funding and staffing have necessitated a reorganization of the program. During this process the department will make every effort to incorporate the recommendations of the report. In its response, the department provided additional information, some of which was incorporated into the report.

The Judiciary did not fully agree with the findings. In its response, it reiterated statements made during the audit but provided no new evidence. However, the Judiciary did state that it will try to implement the recommendations of the report.

The Department of Education concurs with the recommendations of the audit. However, in its response, the department contends that its standards have always been at Level 2 for its schools and offices. It was not apparent during the audit that the department had established separate cleanliness levels except for "dust and soil free."

The University of Hawaii did not provide a written response.

Marion M. Higa
State Auditor
State of Hawaii

Office of the Auditor
465 South King Street, Room 500
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 587-0800
FAX (808) 587-0830