

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 2, 2020

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Service First**

The Code Compliance Department initiated the Service First Program in September 2019. This process increases service delivery while efficiently resolving minor violations. Instead of sending staff to inspect and verify every reported property complaint, the Service First Agents send a Courtesy Notice seeking voluntary compliance to the property owner or tenant.

The individual in violation can text or email a photo showing compliance to the Service First Representative often resulting in a case closure and eliminating on-site inspections. Issues such as litter, overgrown vegetation, garage sales and parking on unapproved surfaces are resolved using this process.

Staff encourages reporting parties to provide contact information so follow up “quality assurance” calls can be made verifying compliance and customer satisfaction. Since the inception of the program, Service First has mailed approximately 6000 Courtesy Notices and experienced a 59% compliance rate.

As part of Code Enforcement's continuous process improvement and the necessity to adjust to challenges posed by COVID-19, we restructured the program in August 2020. We added a Supervisor, five Inspectors, and seven Neighborhood Code Representatives to the seven-existing staff.

Service First has become a successful community engagement tool, encouraging residents to partner with the City to fulfill the mission of maintaining vibrant and thriving communities.

Benefits of the program include the following:

1. Limits Code Inspector face to face contact with the property owner or occupant, especially in a COVID-19 environment.
2. Saves time and resources as Inspectors do not have to physically inspect every property upon initial receipt of alleged violation(s)
3. Provides education to owners/occupants regarding property maintenance standards
4. Allows code officers to continue to focus their attention on COVID-19 issues while working proactively in their district
5. Saves the City money - the average cost to resolve a case with physical inspections is approximately \$150. Service First Representatives can resolve at least 59% of cases with 50-cent postage and a follow-up phone call.

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6. Service First Agents can handle seven to ten cases per hour versus two cases performed by a Field Inspector.
7. Provides residents with access to Service First Agents who can answer a multitude of questions.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself or Carl Simpson, Director of Department of Code Compliance Services.



**Jon Fortune**  
**Assistant City Manager**

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
Chris Caso, City Attorney  
Mark Swann, City Auditor  
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary  
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge  
Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager  
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services  
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion  
Directors and Assistant Directors