

Office of the Mayor
Office of Special Projects
FY25 Mayor's Office of Special Projects Cameron Community Ministries
Agreement 139552

Distribution: Malik D. Evans, Mayor
Michael Burns, Deputy Mayor
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Office of Public Integrity
Date: 1/10/2025
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Public Integrity (OPI) conducted a review of agreement 139552 with Cameron Community Ministries (CCM), one of four community organizations participating in the City's Neighborhood Ambassador pilot program. In this review, OPI examined the agreement, reviewed the adequacy of internal control procedures and tested compliance with the City's Neighborhood Ambassador Program. The Mayor's Office of Special Projects administers this program. We reviewed payroll for all participants during the period of August 16, 2024 to October 25, 2024 and reviewed program expenses incurred between August and October 2024 for validity. The results of this review indicate, in general, adequate internal control procedures over the operations and compliance with the program requirements. However, we noted the following findings that require management attention to improve administrative and internal controls and to ensure further compliance with the program.

BACKGROUND OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

A. Assignment

We conducted this review at the request of the Mayor's Office. The Monroe County's Office of Public Integrity recently completed an audit which included Cameron Community Ministries. There were significant findings prompting the City to perform due diligence and review the City Neighborhood Ambassador program agreement with this organization.

B. Background

The City of Rochester's Neighborhood Ambassador Program (NAP) is a pilot program designed to address the opioid crisis while fostering safer, cleaner, and more connected neighborhoods. The program operates in four target areas within the City through partnerships with trusted local organizations. Cameron Community Ministries serves the Lyell Avenue area of Rochester. Through this program, Neighborhood Ambassadors are recruited, trained, and supported to serve as vital links between the community and the City. Ambassadors work on relationship building, resource referrals, anti-litter efforts, and opioid crisis interventions, including distributing naloxone (Narcan) kits. Each community based organization facilitates public education on drug disposal, emergency response, and overdose prevention, while also providing wraparound services to ambassadors, including job training and health checkups.

C. Objectives and Scope

The objectives of this audit are to assess the adequacy of internal controls, ensure that program goals are met or exceeded, test expenditures and

supporting documentation, and ensure that payments are made in accordance with the agreement. The scope of the audit was from August 1, 2024 to November 1, 2024.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a system of internal accounting and administrative control. Fulfilling this responsibility requires estimates and judgments by management to assess the expected benefits and related costs of control procedures. The objectives of a system are to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, and that transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of accurate, informative reports that are fairly stated.

Due to inherent limitations in any system of internal accounting and administrative control, errors or irregularities may nevertheless occur and not be detected. In addition, projection of any system evaluation to future periods is subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions or that the degree of compliance with procedures may deteriorate.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and the International Standards for Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The recommendations presented in this report include the more significant areas of potential improvement that came to our attention during the course of the examination, but do not include all possible improvements that a more extensive review might develop.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

The results of our testing indicate that new administrative procedures have been initiated and program requirements of the participants are being met. However during our review we noted inadequate internal controls with regards to cash handling and recording of expenses. The following deficiencies require management attention.

A. Lack of Supporting Documentation for Expenses

OPI reviewed all checks written between August 19, 2024 and November 2, 2024. All voided checks were retained and reviewed without exception. We identified five program related expenses totaling \$476.35 during the scope period

examined. CCM did not provide supporting documentation for all of these expenses. OPI requested five receipts to support the expenses and CCM provided only one for \$69.94. In conclusion, \$406.41 in expenses was not supported with documentation. Without supporting documents we are unable to test the validity of expenses.

Recommendation

We recommend that all expenses be properly recorded and supporting documentation be retained and readily available for review,

B. Inadequate Safeguarding of Cash

We noted that CCM is making cash withdrawals to provide participants with weekly stipends. We found adequate controls were not in place to safeguard cash on hand. CCM is looking for alternatives to cash for the participants stipends and working with a locksmith to repair or replace the safe.

Recommendation

We recommend that CCM explore alternatives to cash stipends. Additionally, the office should have a locked safe for cash and checks to be secured.

C. Excess Withdrawal Amounts for Stipend Payments

OPI reviewed time records for the program participants and agreed the hours reported to the hours paid. We reviewed 11 pay periods from August 23, 2024 to November 1, 2024. Eight of the pay periods had discrepancies between the bank withdrawals and the calculated amounts. One of the withdrawals was identified as an overage of \$150.00 and corrected with a subsequent withdrawal shortage of \$150.00 and a third was short \$30.00. However, the remaining five withdrawals with discrepancies exceeded the payroll amount for a total of \$1,040.00. OPI was told that some withdrawals included other amounts for other purposes but this was not supported with documentation, The chart on the following page shows bank withdrawals compared to the amount of stipends recorded on participant timesheets.

Cameron Community Ministries
Analysis of Bank Withdrawals and Stipend Payments

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Withdrawal</u>	<u>Timesheets</u>	<u>Difference</u>
08/23/2004	\$ 1,830.00	\$ 1,620.00	\$ 210.00
08/30/2024	\$802.50	\$ 802.50	\$ -
09/06/2024	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ -
09/13/2024	\$ 1,597.50	\$1,627.50	\$(30.00)
09/20/2024	\$ 1,987.50	\$ 1,972.50	\$ 15.00
09/27/2004	\$ 2,600.00	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 575.00
10/04/2024	\$ 1,942.50	\$ 1,852.50	\$ 90.00
10/11/2024	\$ 1,747.50	\$ 1,747.50	\$ -
10/18/2024	\$ 2,287.50	\$ 2,137.50	\$ 150.00
10/25/2024	\$ 2,175.00	\$ 1,995.00	\$ 180.00
11/01/2024	<u>\$ 1,935.00</u>	<u>\$ 2,085.00</u>	<u>\$(150.00)</u>
	<u>\$19,805.00</u>	<u>\$18,765.00</u>	<u>\$1,040.00</u>

Recommendation

OPI recommends that cash withdrawals be avoided whenever possible and that withdrawals for stipends be reconciled to the amount to be paid each week. Additionally, other withdrawals should be substantiated and made with a separate transaction.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

The response to this report of the Mayor's Office of Special Projects begins on the next page.



City of Rochester

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

To: Timothy R. Weir, Director Office of Public Integrity
From: Liliana Ruiz, Director of Special Projects
Date: January 7, 2024
Subject: Office of the Mayor
FY25 Mayor's Office of Special Projects Cameron Community Ministries
Agreement 139552

Below is the response to the Office of Public Integrity (OPI) examination of Office of the Mayor FY25 Mayor's Office of Special Projects Cameron Community Ministries Agreement 139552. This memorandum is offered regarding your findings.

1. OPI Recommendation

We recommend that all expenses be properly recorded and supporting documentation be retained and readily available for review,

Department Response: Agreed.

I will request for budget and expense updates to be included with quarterly reports which are due before next payments are issued. Copies of invoices will also be requested.

2. We recommend that CCM explore alternatives to cash stipends. Additionally, the office should have a locked safe for cash and checks to be secured.

Department Response: Agreed.

I would like the next round of contracts to be modified to state that the NAPs should issue cash cards oppose to cash and include the fee in their budgets.

3. OPI Recommendation

We recommend that cash withdrawals be avoided whenever possible, that withdrawals for stipends be reconciled to the amount to be paid each week. Additionally any other withdrawals should be substantiated and made with a separate transaction.

Department Response: I will meet with legal to review the recommendations and how we can incorporate all 3 in the second round of NAP contracts.