



CASE STUDY



City of McAllen Delivers
High-Quality, Flawless Audit Reports
Thanks to Papercheck



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City of McAllen, TX

Taxpayers, citizens, and public officials alike in cities across the country are concerned about how effectively their government uses its resources. While taxpayers and citizens want quality services that are cost effective, officials want assurance that the programs they create are administered effectively, efficiently, and economically. This is the job of the city auditor.

For Cathy B. Jones, city auditor for McAllen, TX, this used to mean tedious and time-consuming writing and re-writing to produce the audit reports and updates she regularly sent to the City Audit Committee. That was until she began using the editing and proofreading services of Papercheck, LLC.

Jones has been city auditor for more than 20 years for McAllen, an all-American city on the border in South Texas. The 100-year-old city (it was incorporated in 1911) today boasts a population of 171,000. The audit department is small; it's just Jones and an assistant city auditor. Yet they produce an average of seven major audits a year, a host of audit updates, numerous special assignment reports, fraud hotline tip investigations, and a yearly risk assessment report. In addition to being submitted to the Audit Committee, all reports are available to the public.

Papercheck Produces Clear, Succinct—and Flawless—Documents

Performing an audit is a complex process that requires planning and organizing. This can be a time-consuming and tedious exercise. Common tasks include compiling observations, collecting data, adding evidentiary evidence, organizing the materials, and then writing the audit report.

Jones explains, "Auditors often have to spend a lot of time writing and editing so that the end product is a well-written and high-quality document. Now, my time is used more effectively because I can produce an initial draft of a report, send it to Papercheck for editing, and get back a report that communicates clearly, succinctly, and flawlessly."



Key Challenges

- Provide high-quality and error-free audit reports for the city
- Decrease time spent writing and rewriting reports
- Availability of quick turnaround, when needed

Solution Summary

When your reports are your "product," it's essential that they are well-written and high-quality documents. This is especially true when the reports, such as the audit reports from the City of McAllen, are available to the public. **Papercheck** provides the clear, concise, and easy-to-understand reports needed and gives the city auditor confidence that the reports circulated are the best they can be.

Industry

Government

Results

- Clear, concise, and easy-to-understand audit reports for city departments
- Report rewriting virtually eliminated—saving significant time for the audit department
- Quick turnaround whenever it's needed

In order to meet the expectations of the City Audit Committee for documents that are not only “user-friendly” but also grammatically correct, Jones sought out a professional editing service. Papercheck came highly recommended by a colleague, notes Jones. That was more than five years ago.

“As auditors, our reports are our products,” said Jones. “However, I think most auditors, like me, are not writers. We’re trained in observation and assessment and considering the facts. These observations and assessments, though, need to be put into reports that can be easily read and understood.”

The audits cover all city departments—airport, international toll bridges, public utilities, and internal organizations like finance, IT, and purchasing. They evaluate such things as whether the city operates efficiently and effectively; enforces collection and reporting efforts; accounts for and safeguards assets from loss, damage, or inappropriate use; complies with laws, regulations, established policies, and procedures; manages and maintains the accounting and statistical data; and accomplishes its goals and objectives.

Jones used to spend many hours writing and rewriting the reports before presenting them, first to the various department heads and then to the Audit Committee. That was before Papercheck.

Proofreading Improves Clarity

Report quality is extremely important, Jones says, because she sits down personally with the commissioners and utility board members to review the reports. “The last thing you want is a city official pointing out a grammatical error, or saying, ‘You know you could have said it this way and it would have been clearer,’” notes Jones.

Every month, Jones sends at least one or two lengthy audit or special assignment reports as well as shorter update reports to Papercheck for editing. “The reports that come back not only read well, but Papercheck editors also make sure that sentence structure, word usage, voice, and verb tense are correct and that commas are in the right place,” she said.

“Papercheck’s editors catch all those things, little and big, that many times I may not even realize need to be caught,” said Jones. She says she appreciates the kind, but numerous, edits on the documents. “All the corrections and comments come from a real concern for ensuring my reports are always the best they can be.”

If a report needs to be turned around quickly, Jones said Papercheck has always met even the tightest of deadlines. “They do what they say they will do,” she noted.

Jones says, “Papercheck gives me confidence that what I circulate is good—really good.” Now that she has been using Papercheck to help produce her reports, Jones promises that she will “never go back.”

“With Papercheck, I have confidence that every audit report I circulate is the best it could be.”

Cathy Jones, City Auditor, City of McAllen, TX

About McAllen

McAllen is an all-American city on the border of south Texas and Mexico. Located in the heart of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where agriculture, healthcare, and service industries predominate, McAllen now commands attention as the geographical, financial, social, and cultural center of the region. In 2012, McAllen MSA ranked #1 in the nation for long-term job growth, was named fastest-growing metro area in the nation, and was ranked as the best housing market in the nation.



About Papercheck

Papercheck® is a San Francisco-based company that offers document editing and proofreading services to businesses large and small over the Internet (www.papercheck.com). The firm's global network of editing and proofreading professionals delivers top-quality services at reasonable prices and with fast turnaround times.

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