

TEXAS NEIGHBORHOODS TOGETHER

PRIORITY

Municipal Authority: Code Enforcement

Recommendation

Amend state law to eliminate inconsistencies, to make the process more efficient and to provide for flexibility in service of process.

Background

Enforcement of building, health, and safety codes is the second greatest ongoing concern of neighborhoods, running close behind crime prevention. Cities are hampered in their enforcement efforts by a lack of consistency across the various statutes, which have been amended piecemeal over the years. Some time periods provided by law are overly long and help prolong the health, fire, and safety hazards. Service of process requirements are not flexible and in some cases do not provide for alternative service. These statutorily created inefficiencies cause the waste of millions of dollars of municipal funds annually across the State of Texas. Neighborhood activists who are trying to combat community deterioration experience frustration with the process. Training of code compliance officers is more difficult and more expensive because of the unnecessary and unintentional complexity in the law.

Impact

Neighborhoods would see faster response to premise violations. Living conditions for residents of these properties would improve. Municipalities would realize substantial cost savings, both in training costs and in day-to-day administrative expense.