

Supreme Court of Florida

500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1925

PEGGY A. QUINCE
CHIEF JUSTICE
BARBARA J. PARIENTE
R. FRED LEWIS
CHARLES T. CANADY
RICKY POLSTON
JORGE LABARGA
JAMES E. C. PERRY
JUSTICES

THOMAS D. HALL
CLERK OF COURT

KEVIN WHITE
ACTING MARSHAL

June 21, 2010

Honorable Chief Justice Peggy A. Quince
Florida Supreme Court
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1925

Dear Chief Justice Quince:

In accordance with Chapter 20.055 (5) (h), Florida Statutes, I have prepared a report on the status of corrective actions taken by the Court regarding the recommendations from the Auditor General's recent audit of the Florida Uniform Caseload Reporting System (report number 2010-055). Please let me know if you have any questions about the enclosed report.

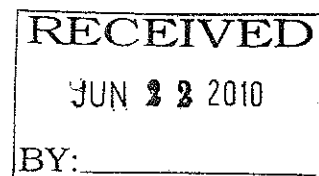
Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Chambers

Kenneth A. Chambers
Inspector General

cc: Legislative Auditing Committee
Lisa Goodner
Greg Youchock

Enclosure



**State Courts System
Office of Inspector General**

Status Report of Corrective Actions Taken

Auditor General Report Number 2010-055

Finding No. 1:

The varied systems used by the Clerks of the Court, State Attorneys, and Public Defenders did not allow for comparability, and were duplicative and inefficient.

Auditor General Recommendation:

The Supreme Court, State Attorneys, and Public Defenders should work with the Legislature, judges, and other users of the data to explore the possibility of jointly developing one Statewide system that would provide timely, accurate, and reliable data in a more efficient and effective manner.

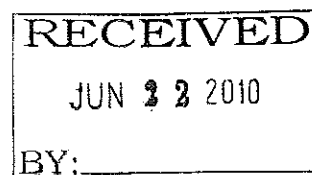
State Courts System Response on 11/9/09:

The Supreme Court through the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) is prepared to work with the Legislature, state attorneys, public defenders, and others to effectuate a comprehensive uniform caseload reporting system. However, it is our recollection that similar recommendations in the past have been met with concerns from the state attorneys and public defenders as to the capture of their entire workload and related matters.

The OSCA has a proven record of success in collaborating with other agencies on technology driven issues. Specifically, I refer you to the Offender Based Transaction System (OBTS) which is a joint effort between the OSCA and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) which captures automated criminal transaction data and the Judicial Inquiry System (JIS) which was a multi-agency automation effort that enables judges to make electronic inquiries as to the criminal histories of defendants. Both systems are highly effective and demonstrate that cross-agency efforts, if implemented properly, can be very successful.

Status of Corrective Action:

As noted in the November 9, 2009 response, the OSCA is always prepared to work with the State Attorneys and Public Defenders to improve interoperability. Currently, there appears little desire to align data systems. This is primarily due to the fact that each



entity has a system that works for them. Thus, it is difficult to justify dedicating the manpower and cost to redesign systems for interoperability. It should also be noted that the Legislature's Technology Review Workgroup (TRW) issued a report on this issue in February 2010. The report is an extensive study that documents the complexities of integration and multiple strategies for implementation. The Legislature did not act upon the report recommendations during the 2010-11 Legislative Session.

On the other hand, the court's data systems are evolving all the time. The Supreme Court in Administrative Order 09-30 has specified that future court systems will include intrinsic capabilities for interoperability with external entities. These foundational design requirements may help reduce the barriers that currently inhibit the efficient interaction between the OSCA, State Attorneys and Public Defenders.

Finding No. 2:

Timeliness of Reports

Auditor General Recommendation:

OSCA, in conjunction with the Clerks offices, should continue its efforts to ensure that the Clerks submit their SRS reports within the time frames provided for in the SRS Manual.

State Courts System Response on 11/9/09:

As noted in the audit, the OSCA has increased its training efforts with the clerks of court and targeted auditing approach for SRS reporting. The OSCA also has a rigorous internal data quality control process which provides for regular communication with counties that are delinquent with their monthly SRS reports including telephone calls and correspondence.

Further, given the importance of this data to the Supreme Court and Legislature, the SRS audit team is one of the few entities that have received an exemption to the strict travel freeze that has been in effect for the last 24 months due to the budget crisis. We concur with the audit finding and are fully committed to ensuring that the submission of SRS data by the clerks remains timely.

Status of Corrective Action:

The OSCA remains committed to the timely receipt and processing of SRS data and continues its efforts in training which includes information on the submission requirements of summary data reports.

Orange County is still experiencing system conversion issues with timely submissions a continuing problem. OSCA staff is working with Orange County staff to address specific issues as required. It should be noted that Duval County has improved their timeliness issue reducing their late submissions by 65%.

Court Services is currently developing a more detailed tracking mechanism for SRS submissions. The foundation for tracking the submission dates and times has been established for all divisions. Final implementation of control chart monitoring is expected to be complete by the end of this year.

Yet, as the Auditor General noted in its report, the OSCA has limited recourse to compel timely submission. Nonetheless, the OSCA continues its proactive procedures for contacting clerks of court that have not submitted SRS data in a timely manner.

Finding No. 5:

Processing and Reporting of SRS Statistical Data

Auditor General Recommendation:

OSCA should ensure that the procedures implemented provide for accurate reporting of the information (i.e., monthly reports) filed by the Clerks.

State Courts System Response on 11/9/09:

The OSCA continually strives to keep all data as accurate and current as possible as it is used to evaluate judicial workload, funding formulas, and legislative bill analyses. The discrepancies between the Statistical Reference Guide and files maintained by the Duval County Clerk of Court are attributed to data entry errors committed by the OSCA. In addition, the OSCA has reviewed its data entry process and refined procedures for generating statistics for future Statistical Reference Guides.

Status of Corrective Action:

As noted in the November 9 response, the OSCA has refined its data entry and tracking procedures to reduce the likelihood of such errors as noted by the Auditor General from re-occurring. Additionally, the OSCA is currently implementing procedures for the submission of monthly SRS data in an electronic format which will improve data accuracy by reducing the requirement for manual data entry for most of the SRS reports.

Finding No. 6:

SRS Data Reporting Errors

Auditor General Recommendation:

The Orange County Clerk and OSCA should continue their efforts to resolve this reporting issue as a means of ensuring that all reporting requirements are appropriately adhered to by the Clerk.

State Courts System Response on 11/9/09:

We concur with the recommendation. The OSCA is aware of the SRS juvenile data reporting discrepancy for Orange County and is working with the county to correct the data.

Status of Corrective Action:

The OSCA has completed work with Orange County and verified that Orange County has corrected the juvenile reporting issue noted. This issue was complicated by the fact that the records submitted by Orange County were correct according to the Offender Based Transaction System specifications even though they were not correct per the Summary Reporting System specifications. Consequently, it was not possible to identify these records as in error without a physical audit. To overcome this deficiency, we have incorporated a specific validation in our audit protocols to identify the potential for similar situations at the county level.