



# Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

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## Department of Corrections Performance Audit Report 98-3

This audit of the Department of Corrections (DOC) looked at issues of efficiency, legislative compliance, and effectiveness in many of the agency's major responsibilities. The audit found that the Department has a positive performance record in many cases and has initiatives underway that may further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

Some of the concerns and recommendations identified in the audit focus on the strategic development, management, and use of resources dedicated to offender programming. Recommendations are also made to save at least \$641,000 annually in Food Services and to ensure that current Department initiatives related to analyzing staffing are focused on benchmark practices, not just equalizing resources.

In addition, the audit team found that data are lacking in key areas, which therefore limits the Department's strategic planning efforts for programs and the accountability of community supervision activities.

### Background

This audit focused on issues of current legislative interest and areas of DOC that had significant policy or fiscal importance.

### Performance Measures

The Department's record on common performance measures, such as inmate escapes and prison assaults, was favorable. The Department's strategic plan and performance measurement system met basic

requirements. However, there is a lack of continuity between the objectives and overall goals, and a lack of appropriate outcome measures. This limits the Department's ability to strategically direct its efforts and measure performance.

### Prison Staff & Purchasing

The review found that institutional staffing costs per bed are declining. Non-labor costs per bed are remaining stable.

DOC is in the process of developing a non-custody staffing model. The audit outlines expectations for the model to identify workload drivers and reflect benchmark practices.

Food Services staffing and raw food costs were explored and auditors found that DOC could save between \$641,000 and \$779,000 annually. The savings would result from changing the use of secondary kitchens at major institutions, eliminating unjustified positions, and eliminating the added cost associated with Correctional Industries Food Factory purchases.

### **Community Supervision**

There are many changes occurring in community supervision this year. The audit found that some of the operational changes are positive steps. It is too soon, however, to comment on the Department's shift from monitoring offenders to monitoring *and* targeting specific offender characteristics for case management and intervention.

A review of expenditures showed that the cost of supervision remained relatively stable. Changes underway,

however, will make projecting future auditors also found that the Department cannot account for how well it complies with its statutory responsibility to enforce sentencing conditions. Two recommendations are made to address the need for maintaining workload and fiscal records and tracking enforcement efforts.

### **Offender Programming**

The auditors found that DOC has complied with recent mandates, such as focusing on basic education and expanding Correctional Industries.

Our analysis also found that DOC lacks a strategic approach to offender programming. The Department does not have the coordinated management oversight needed to ensure that its programs have clear goals and objectives, are developed and implemented consistently, and are effective in achieving its goals. Research efforts are also not coordinated or prioritized. The audit recommends action steps the Department should take to improve its management and fiscal oversight over offender program planning.

### **Recommendations**

There are eight recommendations targeted at:

- 1) Improving DOC's strategic plan and measures,
- 2) Ensuring DOC's non-custody staffing model represents cost-effective benchmarks,
- 3) Saving approximately \$700,000 annually in Food Services staffing,
- 4) Tracking how well DOC enforces conditions in community supervision,
- 5) Maintaining important fiscal data for community supervision,
- 6) Addressing management and research limitations related to offender programming,
- 7) Establishing better fiscal controls within offender programming, and
- 8) Conducting a program review of the Chemical Dependency Treatment program.