

# **LBA Performance Audit Report Summary:**

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Department of Corrections, Division Of Field Services Audit Report – December 2003

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This performance audit of the Department of Corrections division of field services (DFS) was conducted to: 1) assess division case management policies and implementation of those policies 2) test division compliance with court- and parole-board orders and other relevant State laws, administrative rules, and division rules, and 3) assess management controls for fine, fee, and restitution collection.

The DFS is responsible for supervising offenders placed in the community, collecting and disbursing offender payments, and conducting court- and parole board-ordered investigations. The division maintains district offices in all ten New Hampshire counties with two offices located in Hillsborough County.

Starting in December 1999 the division's offender management system ceased functioning and its replacement could not track offenders or their fines, fees, and victim restitution obligations and payments. Initially, the DFS did a poor job addressing this major deficiency while waiting for a new system that never materialized. The division spent significant time and resources manually tracking offender payments and paying victims. Losing a fully functional system had additional negative consequences for administration, oversight, planning, reporting, and offender supervision. Because a new offender management system has never been completed:

- public safety has been put at greater risk;
- money collected from offenders has not been disbursed timely, if at all; and
- the division has been thrown into disarray as demonstrated in many of the observations presented in this report.

### **Observations**

Our report presents 20 observations with recommendations. Five address offender supervision; five address the handling of offender payments; five address information technology controls; two address contract management; and three address program evaluation.

#### **Improve Offender Supervision**

We found PPOs were less likely to meet supervision standards for high-risk offenders than low-risk offenders. In fact, PPOs were more likely to exceed supervision standards for low-risk offenders. In addition, PPOs were not consistently conducting required semi-annual and annual offender case reviews.

#### **Improve Collection And Disbursement Of Offender Payments**

We found significant problems with collecting, tracking, and disbursing offender payments. For almost three years, victim restitution was manually tracked and inconsistently disbursed to victims using a labor-intensive process. As of December 2003, monthly payments were being disbursed through the partially completed offender management system. However, we estimate hundreds of victims were not receiving payment because some manually tracked information had not been entered in the system.

### **Strengthen Management Of Information Technology**

We found the DOC has a number of weaknesses related to general computer system controls. Specifically, the department had inadequate policies and procedures for disaster recovery, software development and change control, and system access controls. Additionally, some DFS policies were not aligned with the current offender management system's functionality.

### **Improve Contract Management**

We found the DOC mishandled the contract for a new offender management system, especially in response to missed deadlines and paying for incomplete deliverables. In addition, there were no personnel at the DOC with the technical knowledge to properly administer this contract.

### **Evaluate DFS Activities**

We found many DFS personnel and other stakeholders believe the DFS lacked adequate resources and staff. Chief PPOs reported needing additional PPOs, case technicians, secretaries, and court referral officers. However, the DFS did not measure its effectiveness based on its current resources or estimate what could be done with additional resources.