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Report Highlights

Sex Offender and Child Predator Registry

State of Louisiana

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Why We Conducted This Audit

We conducted this audit to evaluate whether data in Louisiana's Sex Offender and Child Predator Registry (Registry) is reliable. State law requires the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information within the Department of Public Safety's Office of State Police (LSP) to develop and maintain the Registry. According to state law, the goal of the Registry is to assist in the efforts of local law enforcement agencies to protect their communities by providing the public with information about sex offenders. The public can access specific information on sex offenders through the LSP website. The reliability of data in the Registry is important because inaccurate and incomplete information can result in the public not being aware of the location or existence of sex offenders in particular areas. In addition, law enforcement agencies use this information to assist in investigating sex crimes.

What We Found

We found that the Registry included all sex offenders we reviewed who were required to register. However, we identified issues with how managing agencies enter and document registration activities, and with the reliability of certain data in the Registry. Specifically, we found that:

- **Although multiple agencies are involved in registering and entering data on sex offenders, state law does not give any agency the responsibility of ensuring that data in the Registry is reliable. While LSP has developed some processes to validate the data, and the Sexual Predator Apprehension Team (SPAT) within the Attorney General's Office has issued guidance on how to enter data, neither can mandate that agencies follow this guidance or correct data issues.** As a result, managing agencies are not always entering data into the Registry consistently and in accordance with recommended guidance. This was also cited in our 2008 audit, but no changes to state law have been made to address this issue.

A Sex Offender and Child Predator Registry is an electronic database of information on convicted sex offenders residing, working, or attending school in Louisiana. Examples of sex offenses that require registration include:

- Rape
- Sexual battery
- Indecent behavior with a juvenile
- Computer-aided solicitation of a minor

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from R.S. 15:541.

As of February 13, 2020, there were **11,312** actively registered sex offenders on the Registry.

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from the Registry.

Continued on next page

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What We Found

Examples of Roles for Agencies Involved in the Registry	
Agency	Example of Agency's Roles
Department of Corrections (DOC) and Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ)	Pre-register sex offenders prior to being released from incarceration or when sentenced to probation by entering data into the Registry.
Parish sheriff's offices and municipal police departments (i.e., Managing Agencies)	Ensure and document sex offenders' in-person registration appearances and provide required information and documentation.
Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information within the Department of Public Safety's Office of State Police (LSP)	Maintains the Registry and validates some data, such as whether fingerprints were obtained, any known vehicles or addresses were added, and whether a photograph of the sex offender was added, among other requirements.
Sexual Predator Apprehension Team (SPAT) within the Attorney General's Office	Reviews sex offender's file within one year of the sex offender's registration end date for compliance with sex-offender registration laws.
Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from state law, DOC, OJJ, Sheriff's Offices, municipal police departments, LSP, and SPAT.	

- **Managing agencies did not always assign sex offenders to the correct tier. We found that 48 (60.8%) of the 79 sex offenders we reviewed were assigned to a tier that was not supported by court or other documentation in the Registry. These tiers are important because they provide information to the public on the severity of the sex offense and dictate how long a sex offender remains on the Registry.** In addition, we found that registration dates were not always entered correctly. Incorrect registration dates could result in sex offenders registering, paying fees, and remaining under managing agencies' supervision for a longer period of time than required by their offense.
- **Managing agencies did not always document when or if sex offenders updated their registration information as required by law. We found that 21 (70.0%) of 30 sex offenders we reviewed did not have registration updates documented in the Registry.** Documenting that sex offenders updated registration requirements is important to demonstrate to the public that sex offenders are in compliance with state law. In addition, we found that managing agencies' efforts to bring these sex offenders into compliance, such as issuing arrest warrants when sex offenders do not show up to update their registration, were not always documented in the Registry.
- **Employment data and deceased status was not always correct in the Registry. For example, we found that 19 (76.0%) of 25 sex offenders we reviewed had a job that was not included in the Registry, and 54 (0.5%) of 11,312 sex offenders who were listed as active on the Registry were actually deceased.** To better ensure the Registry is complete and accurate, LSP and other managing agencies could use data from other agencies, such as employment data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission and death data from the Louisiana Department of Health.

In addition, we identified challenges managing agencies face in enforcing sex offender registry laws, including insufficient funding and enforcement of community notification requirements for indigent sex offenders.

View the full report, including management's response, at www.la.gov.