Management of Offender Data: Processes for Ensuring Accuracy

Department of Corrections

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Why We Conducted This Audit

We conducted this audit to evaluate the Department of Corrections's (DOC) management of offender data, including its processes for ensuring the accuracy of that data. More than half of Louisiana's approximately 35,000 inmates are housed in parish facilities and work release centers, with the remaining housed in the state's nine correctional facilities. Because offenders are housed all across the state, it is important for DOC management to have centralized, accurate, and up-to-date information on all the offenders under its supervision.

What We Found

Overall, we found that DOC needs to implement or strengthen existing policies and procedures to more effectively manage offender data, including better tracking of offender locations and a consistent method of calculating release dates. In addition, data stored in the Criminal and Justice Unified Network system (CAJUN), which is DOC's primary mechanism for tracking state offenders, is not always accurate, which can limit DOC's and stakeholders' decision-making abilities. We identified the following issues:

- **Offender locations are not always accurate in CAJUN, particularly for offenders housed in local facilities, because DOC policy does not include a timeframe for when local facilities must notify DOC of a transfer to another local facility.** We reviewed 100 files and found 11 (11%) offenders who were at a facility other that what was in CAJUN. Of these 11 offenders, four (36.4%) were violent offenders.

- **DOC's procedures for monitoring offender data entry, especially for offenders in local facilities, are not sufficient to identify all data errors.** DOC does not include offenders housed in local facilities in its quality assurance audits. We sampled 100 offender files at nine local facilities and one state facility and found that 19% of offender files had at least one error in CAJUN.

- **DOC's process for calculating offender release dates is inconsistent, which can result in errors.** DOC does not have any policies, procedures, manuals, or standardized guidance that outlines the correct way to calculate release dates. This leads to inconsistent calculation methods.

- **Former DOC employees still have access to CAJUN and have the ability to change data. We found that 38% of CAJUN user IDs were assigned to former DOC employees, which poses a risk to the security of CAJUN data. Without proper revocation procedures, there is a risk that former DOC employees may be able to make unauthorized changes to offender data.** Of the 216 Office of Adult Services user IDs that permit changes to offender data, 83 (38%) did not match any current employees.

- **DOC spent $3.6 million on a new data system that was supposed to have allowed for better tracking of offenders. However, the system failed due to inadequate planning and testing.** The OMS went live on June 15, 2015, and it was taken off-line on July 31, 2015, due to system failures.