

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Information System Audit

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SUBJECT TRACKING AND
REPORTING SYSTEM (DOCSTARS)**

Report Dated May 25, 2004

Client Code 2600

May 18, 2006

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER

May 18, 2006

Honorable John Hoeven, Governor
Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly

Leann K. Bertsch, Director
North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

A fundamental objective of the Office of the State Auditor's work is to bring about improvements through recommendations. To achieve this, our recommendations need to be timely and effectively implemented. The Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee (LAFRC) has requested the Office of the State Auditor to perform follow-up work after presentation of audit reports to the Committee. The LAFRC has also requested the Office of the State Auditor report those agencies which have not implemented audit recommendations.

The Office of the State Auditor has conducted an audit follow-up on the information system audit of the Department Of Corrections Subject Tracking And Reporting System (DOCSTARS), issued May 25, 2004. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was contacted and limited testing was performed. Our conclusions are based on limited tests, and there is a possibility that more substantial testing might have changed our conclusions.

This report addresses the recommendations that: have been fully implemented and that have not been implemented. Our follow-up review did not identify any recommendations that were only partially implemented or no longer applicable.

As a result of the follow-up review, two recommendations were determined to be fully implemented and one was determined to be not implemented. The following pages identify these recommendations and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's responses.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert R. Peterson
State Auditor

RECOMMENDATIONS FULLY IMPLEMENTED

Excess user accounts

Original Condition:

We noted multiple user accounts that were not for active employees. We also noted 9 user accounts that did not have passwords associated with them. Management should establish procedures to ensure timely action relating to the closing of user accounts. Passwords should be required. Keeping user accounts active for terminated employees and accounts without passwords creates a risk of unauthorized access.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation perform an annual review of all user accounts to verify that access is appropriate and ensure timely action relating to suspending and closing user accounts.

Action Taken:

The agency implemented quarterly audits on DOCSTARS security accounts and deletes security accounts that are no longer required.

Summary of Testing:

We reviewed the security rights surrounding DOCSTARS and determined that user accounts were necessary and passwords were in place.

Inadequate edit checks

Original Condition:

DOCSTARS edit checks are not adequate to ensure all data is accurate, valid, and complete. Missing edit checks of significance were no edit checks for date fields and no edit checks in the system editor, the utility used by administrative staff to edit data. We noted invalid dates in multiple fields within DOCSTARS. Edit checks are necessary to ensure that data entered is accurate, valid, and complete.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation incorporate sufficient edit checks in DOCSTARS.

Action Taken:

The agency implemented a host of new edits into DOCSTARS to insure greater integrity and value in the collected data. See attached spreadsheet files Audit_fixes.xls and LSI_dump.xls that provide for each audit issue and the implemented edit. Record data that could be corrected and verified was edited and changed, older records that have

nothing to do with the integrity of Docstars and that could not be verified due to the age of the data have not been changed. These records which date back to 1988 have no operational importance except for historical reference.

Summary of Testing:

We analyzed data from DOCSTARS and reviewed the design and coding of the system and noted that a variety of edit checks have been put in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS NOT IMPLEMENTED

Lack of integration between Field Services and institutional systems

Original Condition:

There are no procedures or interfaces in place to share data between DOCSTARS and ITAG. This results in inefficiencies with entering data twice and an increased risk of errors occurring in data entry. Although there is a module that ties together with ITAG, DOCR had chosen not to purchase it because of its cost and lack of funding.

Recommendation:

We recommend the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation integrate its Field Services system and its institutional offender system.

Action Taken:

The DOCR has implemented an interface between DOCSTARS and Itag. The interface provides inmate status information and loads DOCSTARS with inmate goodtime release dates that provide DOCSTARS with the means to identify which offenders are inmates. An Integrated OMS (Offender Management System) for the adult DOCR divisions has always been a goal of the agency, but due to a historic lack of funding we have been unable to procure a unified system that would fit the needs of both the Field Services and institutional operations. Future plans for DOCSTARS includes a re-write of the product into a full web based application using a more secure database product. The new product will incorporate the sharing of data with Itag (institutional information system) as required

Summary of Testing:

We reviewed the interface between DOCSTARS and ITAG and conducted interviews with the client to review DOCR's efforts to integrate its field services and institutional offender systems.

DOCR has sought funding for an integrated solution in the past, DOCR has had to seek emergency funding for its regular operations and therefore has prioritized an integrated solution in agency budget requests.

During our discussion with the client, it was noted that a rewrite of the product is not currently planned within the next five years.

While the interface implemented appears to have resulted in a time-saving process, it is not sufficient in the implementation of this recommendation. While DOCSTARS is a good system that serves Parole & Probation's current needs, we believe that an integrated system provides the best solution for continuity in the effective treatment and rehabilitation of offenders.

Future Action to Be Taken:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation should continue to seek an integrated solution for its field services and institutional offender systems.

Agency Response:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) concurs with the recommendation to integrate the Field Services system (DOCSTARS) and the institutional offender system (ITAG). However, funding has been and continues to be a major obstacle in implementing this recommendation. Complete implementation of this recommendation is dependent upon funding. Initial cost estimates to accomplish the integration totals approximately \$2.9 million. DOCSTAR and ITAG system integration will be included as an optional adjustment request in the DOCR 2007- 2009 agency budget request.