

**Audit of Probation Intake and Screening  
Report Number A-1516DJJ-002  
February 11, 2016**

**By**

**The Office of the Inspector General  
Bureau of Internal Audit**

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Christina K. Daly, Secretary

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**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** February 11, 2016

**TO:** Christina K. Daly, Secretary  
Melinda M. Miguel, Chief Inspector General, Executive Office of the Governor

**FROM:** Robert A. Munson, Inspector General *RAM*

**SUBJECT:** Final Report - #A-1516DJJ-002, *Audit of Probation Intake and Screening*

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Please find the enclosed copy of our final audit report *Audit of Probation Intake and Screening*. The Bureau of Internal Audit will conduct a follow-up review to determine the status of corrective actions taken to address the reported findings.

We would like to thank the Office of Probation for the assistance extended to our audit staff in the audit process. Please feel free to contact Michael Yu, Auditor Director, at 850-717-2468 if you have any questions.

RM/my/km

Attachment

**Cc:** Timothy Niermann, Deputy Secretary  
Fred Schuknecht, Chief of Staff  
Paul Hatcher, Assistant Secretary, Probation and Community Intervention  
Sherrill F. Norman, Auditor General  
Kathy DuBose, Director, Legislative Auditing Committee

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**Rick Scott, Governor**

**Christina K. Daly, Secretary**

*The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.*

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**Office of Inspector General  
Bureau of Internal Audit  
Audit of Probation Intake and Screening  
Audit No. A-1516DJJ-002**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	
Background	2
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	2
RESULTS OF AUDIT	
Finding 1 – In provider-operated Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACs), files for youth immediately directed into diversion programs and office-specific intake and assessment forms were not readily available for review.	4
Finding 2 – The Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) in-service training policy was not updated to reflect current in-service training practices.	4
Finding 3 – Staff did not always create a new DRAI in the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) when an error was discovered in the initial DRAI score.	5
APPENDIX: Management Response	

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Department of Juvenile Justice (Department), Office of the Inspector General, Bureau of Internal Audit has performed an audit of Probation Intake and Screening. The audit objective was to determine whether State and provider-operated Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACs) perform intake and screening in accordance with established rules, case files maintain appropriate documentation, and intake staff are properly trained. The audit scope was from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, and related activities through the end of fieldwork.

The Florida Statutes, Florida Administrative Codes, and Department and Probation Office Policies outline procedures for Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) conducting intake and screening. In addition, they define the training requirements necessary to perform the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) and the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) assessment.

The audit indicated that youth intake and screenings are generally performed in accordance with established rules, with JPOs accurately completing Juvenile Justice Information Systems (JJIS) specific documents. The audit also revealed that JPO staff has received initial training specific to conducting intake and screening assessments and provided evidence of required in-service training. However, the audit indicated that case files for youth screened at provider-operated JACs and directed into diversion programs were not readily available for review. Further, office specific forms, such as the Probation Medical and Mental Health Clearance form, the Authorization for Evaluation and Treatment (AET) form, and the Department's Affidavit of Release form or Circuit specific Authorization of Release forms, were sometimes misplaced or lost. Additionally, the audit revealed that DRAI training was not always performed in accordance with Probation Office policies; and cases involving an improper or unauthorized release of a youth were not always handled in accordance with Probation Office policies.

We recommend that youth screening packets be maintained in the JJIS Document Library Module following completion of intake and screening. We also recommend that Probation Policy PCI-11-004 be updated to reflect current in-service training practices. We further recommend that staff be reminded to follow Probation Policy PCI-13-002, in completing new DRAIs when errors are found in initial DRAI scores, and supervisory oversight be implemented to ensure compliance.

## **Audit of Probation Intake and Screening Audit # A-1516DJJ-002**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Office of the Inspector General, Bureau of Internal Audit conducted an audit of Probation Intake and Screening for the period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, and related activities through the end of fieldwork. The audit was initiated based on our Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Audit Plan and conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, published by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

### **Background**

The Office of Probation and Community Intervention (Office) is responsible for providing services to youth under the age of 18 that are referred by law enforcement authorities to the Department. A referral is similar to an arrest in the adult criminal justice system.

After a law enforcement agency charges a youth with a law violation, depending on the seriousness of the offense and the law enforcement officer's view of what is needed to appropriately address the offense, youth may be taken to a Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) or a Juvenile Detention Center for intake and detention screening. A detention risk assessment evaluates the risk a child may pose to the community and determines if some type of detention is necessary. Youth may be released to parents, guardians, or a responsible adult, or placed in a secure facility depending on the outcome of a detention risk assessment.

Juvenile Probation Officers (JPOs) will also assess youth using the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) to determine the youth's likelihood to re-offend. Using this assessment instrument, JPOs collect information through interviews, observations, and interactions with the youth and family. JPOs also collect information from the complainant, the victim, school officials and other individuals, and agencies associated with the youth and family.

The intake and screening process assists the JPO in choosing the most appropriate recommendation for services that balances the needs and interest of the youth, family, the victim, and the community as a whole.

### **Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The audit objective was to determine whether State and provider-operated Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACS) perform intake and screening in accordance with

established rules, case files maintain appropriate documentation, and intake staff are properly trained.

To achieve the audit objective, we:

- reviewed applicable Florida statutes and rules;
- reviewed Department policies and procedures;
- reviewed contracts for providers that conduct intake and screening processes for the Office of Probation and Community Intervention;
- reviewed JPO position descriptions;
- reviewed statistically selected youth files;
- reviewed employee training records for staff that performed intake and screening assessments on the statistically selected youth;
- reviewed Central Communications Center complaints of Unauthorized Release from Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACs);
- interviewed Probation and Community Intervention management staff; and
- conducted other activities deemed necessary.

The youth files reviewed in the audit process were statistically generated. Statistical sampling was used in order to infer the conclusions of test work performed on a sample of the population from which it was drawn and to obtain estimates of sampling error involved. When appropriate, judgmental sampling was used to improve the overall efficiency of the audit.

Because of inherent limitations associated with sample selection, errors, or irregularities could have occurred but were not detected. As such, projection of the auditor's conclusions based on the selected sample may be different from that reached if all youth files were subjected to the audit procedure.

## **RESULTS OF AUDIT**

The audit indicated that youth intake and screenings are generally performed in accordance with established rules, with JPOs accurately completing both Juvenile Justice Information Systems (JJIS)-specific documents and office-specific documents. The audit also revealed that JPO staff had received initial training specific to conducting intake and screening assessments and management provided evidence of required in-service training. However, the audit indicated that case files for youth screened at provider-operated JACs and directed into diversion programs were not readily available for review. Further, office specific forms, such as the Probation Medical and Mental Health Clearance form, the Authorization for Evaluation and Treatment (AET) form, and the Department's Affidavit of Release form or Circuit-specific Authorization of Release forms, were sometimes misplaced or lost. Additionally, the audit revealed that DRAI training was not always performed in accordance with Probation Office policies; and cases involving an



unauthorized release of youth were not always handled in accordance with Probation Office policies.

### **Details of Findings and Recommendations**

**Finding 1: In provider-operated JACs, files for youth immediately directed into diversion programs and office-specific intake and assessment forms were not readily available for review.**

Department Policy FDJJ-1316, in compliance with Florida's Public Records Law (Florida Statute section 257.36[a]) requires maintenance of records based on administrative needs, audits, legal requirements and program requirements, for a period of five years.

During the audit, 173 statistically selected youth case files were reviewed. It was noted that 49 files were missing documents that should have been completed during the intake and screening process and five files were not found. Probation staff indicated that office-specific forms were not required to be uploaded into JJIS; and files for youth directed to diversion programs by provider-operated JACs were maintained and archived by the provider. As a result, office-specific forms were sometimes misplaced or lost and not available for review.

During the fieldwork review of youth case files it was revealed that JJIS has the capability of retaining both JJIS-specific and office-specific intake and assessment forms as a single file within the Document Library Module. Circuits 4 and 20 currently store files in this manner, which ensured maintenance of youth case files and provided ease of records access.

Without proper maintenance of youth files, the Department might be at risk for improperly releasing youth and may not be in compliance with Florida's Public Records Law (Florida Statute section 257.36[a]).

We recommend Probation and Community Intervention retain all completed intake and screening packets as a single file in the JJIS Document Library Module to properly maintain all youth records.

**Finding 2: The Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) in-service training policy was not updated to reflect current in-service training practices.**

Probation Policy # PCI-11-004 specifies that the intake and screening practitioner will complete 8 hours of DRAI in-service training semi-annually for a total of 16 hours annual training. During the audit, we noted that 105 JPOs conducted intake and screening assessments on selected youth. We reviewed those JPOs' training records to assess

their completion of required training for performing intake and screening assessments. Due to the Department moving from the CORE training management system to SkillPro in January 2014, it was difficult to locate some JPOs' original scores for the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI), the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT), Motivational Interviewing, and Juvenile Justice Information System training. We found complete training records for 53 of the 105 JPOs. Twenty-four (24) JPOs had separated from the Department or providers. Twenty-eight (28) JPOs had incomplete training records with 17 missing the required 8 hours of DRAI in-service training semi-annually for either the period from July to December 2014 or January to June 2015.

When interviewed, Probation managers indicated that the Probation Office no longer requires the 8 hours of DRAI training semi-annually. Rather, it was explained that the Office adheres to the completion of 16 hours of DRAI in-service training annually. This was confirmed in written responses from Chief Probation Officers in response to requests for semi-annual training documents.

We recommend Probation policy PCI-11-004 be updated to reflect current DRAI in-service training practices.

**Finding 3: Staff did not always create a new DRAI in JJIS when an error was discovered in the initial DRAI score.**

Incidents related to the care, safety, and humane treatment of all youth served by the Department are cataloged and tracked by The Central Communications Center (CCC), including incidents of youth improperly released following the intake and screening process. Incidents of "improper/unauthorized release" were reviewed to identify areas of possible concern. Probation Policy PCI-13-002 indicates that when an error is discovered in the initial DRAI, designated staff will complete a new DRAI in JJIS. It further dictates that a statement must be included in the narrative explaining the error identified in the initial DRAI, the revision of the scoring results, and placement outcome. The initial DRAI should be retained in JJIS for historical value.

During fiscal year 2014-2015, 56 unauthorized release complaints were reported to the CCC. Of the 56 unauthorized releases, six were determined to be unsubstantiated and eliminated from further consideration. Twenty (20) unauthorized releases were processed in accordance with Probation Policy PCI-13-002. The remaining 30 unauthorized releases were not processed in accordance with Office policy. Specifically, 12 unauthorized releases had new DRAIs completed in JJIS but the narrative section on the new DRAI did not provide an explanation concerning the errors in the initial DRAI score; 12 of the unauthorized releases did not have new DRAIs; and six had hand-written new DRAIs, but were not uploaded into JJIS.

We recommend Probation ensure staff follow policy PCI-13-002 and implement a measure for ensuring the new DRAI is completed in JJIS with the error identification, score revision, and placement outcome entered into the DRAI Narrative.

## APPENDIX

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** February 10, 2016  
**TO:** Robert Munson, Inspector General  
**FROM:** Paul Hatcher, Assistant Secretary, Probation and Community Intervention  
**SUBJECT:** Audit Response to Probation Intake and Screening Audit, Audit No. A-1516DJJ-002

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The following responses represent Probation management's plan for correcting or improving the findings of the recent Probation Intake and Screening Audit:

**Finding 1: In provider operated JACs, files for youth immediately directed into diversion programs as well as DJJ specific intake and assessment forms were not readily available for review.**

**Recommendation:** Probation and Community Intervention should retain all completed intake and screening packets as a single file in the JJIS Document Library Module to properly maintain all youth records.

**Management Response:** We agree with the auditors' findings, and the following action will be taken to improve the situation:

Intake and Screening Packets – Effective May 1, 2016, as a matter of policy, all intake and screening packets shall be uploaded into the JJIS document library in the "Screening/JAC Packet" folder. The document upload shall occur at the conclusion of the screening process prior to the youth's release to secure detention or to his or his parent/guardian. In the event that the document upload does not occur upon completion of screening, for whatever reason, it will be the juvenile probation officer's (JPOs) responsibility to complete the document upload upon receipt of the intake and screening packet.

Diversion Records – Effective May 1, 2016, for current contracted diversion programs, the department will request our providers assist us by uploading the diversion case management file into the JJIS document library in the "Miscellaneous Documents" folder at the time of the youth's discharge. If, however, our current diversion providers do not

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wish to complete the upload process then the department (i.e. probation) shall complete the upload process upon receipt of the closed case file that providers are required by contract to transfer back to the department at the time of the youth's discharge.

Moving forward, Probation will include a document upload requirement into all new contracts.

For all DJJ state-operated diversion programs (JPO is the operating entity), effective May 1, 2016, as a matter of policy, the JPO will upload the diversion case management file into JJIS at the time of the youth's discharge.

All DJJ state-operated diversion programs (JPO is the operating entity) will upload  
**Finding 2: The Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) in-service training policy was not updated to reflect current in-service training practices.**

**Recommendation:** Probation and Community Intervention should update Probation policy PCI-11-004 to reflect current DRAI in-service training requirements.

**Management Response:** We agree with the auditors' findings. PCI-11-004 has already been updated to include the following:

- **Prior to being assigned the task of completing the DRAI the following initial training requirements must be completed:** Minimum of an 8 hour course of instruction delivered by designated DRAI Trainers using approved DRAI Training curricula. Instruction includes the lecture, practice of activities, discussion, and the administration of the written comprehensive review as designated by Probation HQ for that year.
- **Annual DRAI Practitioner In-Service Training: (Mandatory Staff)**  
Upon achieving DRAI Practitioner Designation status, the Practitioner will complete 16 hours of DRAI in-service annual training.
- **Annual DRAI In-Service Training: (Non-Mandatory Staff)**  
Non-mandatory staff must acquire 8 hours of DRAI in-service training.

**Finding 3: Staff did not always create a new DRAI in JJIS when an error was discovered in the initial DRAI score.**

**Recommendation:** Probation shall ensure staff follow policy PCI-13-002 and implement a measure for ensuring the new DRAI is completed in JJIS with the error identification, score revision, and placement outcome entered into the DRAI Narrative.

**Management Response:** We agree with the auditors' findings, and the following action will be taken to improve the situation: Effective immediately, anytime it has been determined that a DRAI was scored incorrectly, the designated staff will have one (1) business day to upload into JJIS a manual DRAI to include the error identification, score revision, and placement outcome entered into the DRAI Narrative. In addition, this policy requirement will be a point of emphasis in all future DRAI trainings for all mandatory and non-mandatory staff.