



Florida Department of
Law Enforcement

Richard L. Swearingen
Commissioner


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Adam Putnam, *Commissioner of Agriculture*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 18, 2017

TO: Richard L. Swearingen, Commissioner
Office of Executive Director

FROM: Lourdes Howell-Thomas, Inspector General 
Office of Inspector General

SUBJECT: Six-Month Follow-Up Report
Auditor General Report Number 2017-034
Firearm Purchase Program – Prior Audit Follow-Up

Pursuant to Section 20.055(6)(h), F.S., the Office of Inspector General conducted a six-month follow-up of the Auditor General Operational Audit of FDLE. The report was issued in October 2016, and contained one finding and one recommendation.

The attached *Six-Month Follow-Up Report* details the status of implementation. The Department has taken steps to address the recommendation and no further action is needed.

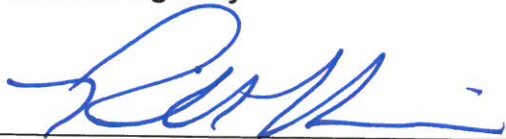
Please let me know if you have any questions. We appreciate the assistance and cooperation provided by members of the Criminal Justice Information Services division during this project.

LHT/lt

Attachment

cc: Charles Schaeffer, Director, CJIS
April Cross, Deputy Director, CJIS
Joint Legislative Auditing Committee

Acknowledged by:



Richard L. Swearingen, Commissioner

Date

4/19/17

Auditor General Report Number 2017-034
Department of Law Enforcement
Firearm Purchase Program (Prior Audit Follow-Up)
Six-Month Status Report

Finding 1: Mental Competency Application Records

Recommendation:

We recommend that Department management establish procedures to monitor the timeliness of entries into the MECOM application and continue to work with the Clerks to ensure that mental defectiveness adjudication and court-ordered mental institution commitment records are timely entered into the MECOM application as required by State law. In addition, we recommend that Department contacts with, and responses from, Clerks in counties for which no records are entered into the MECOM application are adequately documented.

Six-Month Status Response:

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is committed to continued partnership with Florida's Clerks of Court in order to assist them to submit complete and accurate mental health records in a timely manner.

On November 16, 2016, members of the Firearm Eligibility Bureau presented a session at the fall conference of the Florida Court Clerks and Comptrollers (FCCC). Fifty people representing 29 different counties attended the session. FDLE members provided an overview of Florida's Firearm Sale and Delivery Statute with a focus on 790.065(2)(a)4 which requires clerks of court to submit mental health records that are disqualifying for the purchase or possession of a firearm. The conference session included a demonstration of the MECOM system and discussion of how clerks can use system reports to account for court records and entered within periods outlined in statute. In response to a request made at the conference, FDLE and FCCC staff delivered a second session on December 15, 2016 as a webinar for the benefit of individuals who were unable to attend the conference.

FDLE will present a session specific to the clerks of court at the CJIS Annual Training Symposium July 18-20, 2017 in Jacksonville. FDLE plans to continue attending FCCC conferences and incorporating clerks' sessions at the CJIS Annual Training Symposium each year.

After the 2016 Fall FCCC conference, several counties contacted FDLE to announce projects to identify disqualifying mental health records that were not entered at the time of the court order. As a result, Putnam, Pinellas, and Miami-Dade counties have identified and entered over 300 records not previously entered.

FDLE is developing an additional monthly summary report for MECOM users which will provide an instant snapshot of statistical data allowing them to verify submission compliance. In a single report, users will see the total number of records entered broken down as those entered within 30 days or less of court date and those entered 31 days or more after court date, and the

percentage this represents. Managers or supervisors may then run additional reports to return the actual data for further evaluation. The monthly summary report is scheduled for deployment to the production environment in June 2017.

The Firearm Eligibility Bureau has continued working one-on-one with individual clerks. Between October 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017:

- A total of 10,480 court orders have been added to MECOM.
- Of these, 2257 records were entered by FDLE from 20 different counties.
- 133 e-mail contacts were made with clerks and MECOM users in 36 different counties to answer questions, review court orders, provide MECOM access, reset passwords, clarify policy, or otherwise provide assistance. Additional contacts were made by phone.
- Counties with no records to report are asked to notify FDLE each month that there are no submissions.

Finally, FDLE has worked with the Florida Court Clerks and Comptrollers on a multi-year, multi-phase grant project which, when completed, will greatly enhance the entry of records into MECOM. The first phase was for FCCC to upgrade the Comprehensive Case Information System (CCIS). CCIS is the shared web-based system used by all Florida Clerks to record court actions. The upgrade to CCIS version 3.0 records court orders in near real-time. As this phase nears completion, the second phase is for CCIS to push disqualifying mental health orders to a web service that FDLE will consume to pull court actions directly into MECOM. FDLE will respond with a status (success, error, etc.) and a tracking number.

This electronic exchange of information will reduce staff effort and the risk of errors. Since these updates will occur near real time, the interface will also eliminate late entry of orders. FDLE and FCCC technical staffs continue work on this project, with a planned deployment in the Fall of 2017.