

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)

Six-Month Status of Audit Findings

September 1, 2021

Reemployment Assistance Claims and Benefits Information System (CONNECT)
Auditor General Report No. 2021-169, March 2021

Finding No.1: Analysis of System Errors	
Auditor Recommendation	To facilitate the timely resolution of technical system errors and other RA System defects, ensure RA System availability, and limit processing interruptions, we recommend that Department management establish documented processes and procedures for identifying, analyzing, and correcting technical system errors and other RA System defects.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues working to establish documented processes and implement procedures for identifying, analyzing, and correcting technical system errors. As noted in the finding, the Department purchased a performance monitoring tool in July 2020 to monitor application performance and review of system errors. Once fully implemented, the Department will be able to timely identify, analyze and remediate system errors.
Six-Month Status	DEO has deployed a tool to help review system performance and help identify system errors. The team has already used the tool to create new dashboards as well as drill down into code where system errors are displayed within the tool. They also use our logging tool to find system errors that are displayed to provide key indicators of cause. These reduce testing time for the team and help us remediate errors quicker. This finding is fully corrected.

Finding No.2: Application Edits	
Auditor Recommendation	We recommend that Department management continue to improve application edits to ensure the accuracy and integrity of postmark dates and related date sequencing in the RA System.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues to evaluate system enhancements to eliminate the need for a manual process when scanning and indexing documents into the RA System. Most of the edits identified during the prior audit were implemented between September 2019 and February 2020. The remaining application edits were not completed due to the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be implemented by the end of 2021.
Six-Month Status	Due to the pandemic and the implementation of new federal programs, other items have been prioritized. We have updated our anticipated completion date to June 2022.

Finding No.3: Document Intake, Indexing, and Tracking

Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management improve procedures for document intake, indexing, and tracking processes and improve RA System and barcode reading software functionality to ensure that all documents received for processing in the RA System are timely and accurately indexed to the appropriate claimant, claim, and claim issue.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues to develop improved procedures for the document intake and indexing processes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, certain changes need to be incorporated into the Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for document intake and indexing, which is currently in development.
Six-Month Status	Staff training has been implemented to remedy some of these procedural findings. DEO is still on track to implement the updated operating procedures and correct the finding by December 2021.

Finding No.4: Generation of Claim Issues

Auditor Recommendation	We recommend that Department management continue efforts to identify and correct RA System processes related to the appropriate generation of claim issues to ensure that claims are accurately and timely processed.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue to identify and correct any RA System processes related to appropriate generation of claim issues as encountered. Due to the increased workload the Department experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the system issues identified in prior audits for resolution were not fully implemented. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department identified several strategic initiatives that are necessary to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) - DevOps project will assist the Department in improving the completeness and correctness of the application design documentation, related artifacts, and dataflow diagrams for the RA system and will enable the Department to have additional processes in place that aligns RA system functionality with management's business requirements.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by June 2022.

Finding No.5: Creation and Timely Distribution of Claim Notices	
Auditor Recommendation	To ensure written claim notices are promptly provided in accordance with State law, we recommend that Department management continue efforts to correct RA System defects related to the creation and distribution of claimant and employer claim notices.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue to develop improved procedures and identify and correct RA System defects regarding distribution of written claimant and employer claim notices. Due to the increased workload the Department experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; the system issues identified in prior audits for resolution were not fully implemented. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department identified several strategic initiatives that are necessary to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) - DevOps project will assist the Department in improving the completeness and correctness of the application design documentation, related artifacts, and dataflow diagrams for the RA system and will enable the Department to have additional processes in place that aligns RA system functionality with management's business requirements.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by June 2022.

Finding No.6: Overpayments and Erroneous Charges	
Auditor Recommendation	To prevent inaccurate claimant benefit payments and erroneous employer charges from being generated by the RA System, we continue to recommend that Department management correct the RA System processing defects related to claimant benefit payments, claimant overpayments, and employer charges.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue to identify and implement enhancements to the RA System's automated controls to improve the processing of data. The Department has identified several strategic initiatives required to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) - DevOps project will assist the Department in improving the completeness and correctness of the application design documentation, related artifacts, and dataflow diagrams for the RA system and ensure that a process is in place to align RA system functionality with business requirements. This project is expected to assist the Department with implementing more effective system controls to promote more consistent and accurate processing of data regarding claimant benefit payments and employer charges.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by June 2022.

Finding No.7: Language Translation	
Auditor Recommendation	We recommend that Department management continue to improve language translation for RA System claimant communications to ensure compliance with State law and the LEP Plan.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues to review and improve language translations within the CONNECT system. The Department initiated a four-phased project to address this issue. Phase one, relating to monetary determination correspondence, was completed January 2020. Phase two, Appeal correspondence, is in progress. Due to the increased workload the Department experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the system issues identified in prior audits for resolution were not fully implemented, and as a result, the Department has initiated a Cloud Migration project that will assist with remediation of this finding.
Six-Month Status	The multi-phase project has started but was delayed due to the pandemic and competing priorities. DEO is still on track to have this four-phased project completed by the end of June 2023.

Finding No.8: Application Design Documentation	
Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management ensure that RA System data flow diagrams and application design documentation, including use case and functional requirements documentation, are updated and maintained to completely and accurately represent the current state of all processes within the RA System and that the RA System aligns with Department business requirements.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding and continues to update RA System design documentation and complete dataflow diagrams of the RA System. Due to the increased workload the Department experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some efforts to update application design documentation were placed on hold. As mentioned previously, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department identified several strategic initiatives necessary to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) - DevOps project will assist the Department in improving the completeness and correctness of the application design documentation, related artifacts, and dataflow diagrams for the RA system and will enable the Department to have additional processes in place that align RA system functionality with management's business requirements.
Six-Month Status	We have updated our process documentation to allow us to update Use cases and other system documentation as part of our refinement process but have not implemented those changes yet due to all the pandemic efforts. We currently have strategic initiatives around modernization which include System Development Lifecycle (SDLC) - DevOps project which are ongoing. This effort will help us document the RA System design and complete dataflow diagrams of the RA System. We are in the early phase of hiring staff to help lead this effort. We anticipate over the next six months that we will have staff hired, a project plan in place and initiated the project.

Finding No.9: Claimant Passwords	
Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management establish adequate password length and complexity requirements for RA System claimant passwords to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of RA System data and related IT resources.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department is currently developing additional criteria to require claimants to use passwords with more complexity. Passwords would meet the requirements to be defined as complex passwords. Currently, the claimant PIN number is utilized in both the RA CONNECT system and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system, and the Department is reviewing options for administering this large infrastructure change.
Six-Month Status	DEO is currently working on a new authentication method that would include a password to access the RA System. This will include a multi-factor authentication and an identity verification solution. We plan to implement the corrective actions by September 2021.

Finding No.10: Change Management Controls	
Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management improve change management controls to ensure that all implemented RA System program code and data changes are managed by, and do not bypass, the Department's change management process. We also recommend that Department management ensure that Department records evidence that RA System program code and data changes are appropriately authorized, tested, approved, and implemented into the production environment.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue working to improve change management controls by implementing a change process that captures approval of the program implementation package prior to migration. These approvals will be stored, and the Department will continue to improve the documentation process throughout the system change process. The Department plans to improve the Team Foundation Server (TFS) workflow so that approvals are captured, either by saving documentation within TFS or through the workflow itself. The Department will also continue to improve TFS reports so information can be more accessible.
Six-Month Status	Due to competing priorities caused by the pandemic and efficiencies in process changes, this project has been absorbed into the SDLC-DevOps project and has an updated anticipated completion date of June 2022.

Finding No.11: Periodic Review of Access Privileges	
Auditor Recommendation	We recommend that Department management reevaluate the RA System user access privilege reports to ensure that the access reports are consistent with RA System access records and promote an effective review of the appropriateness of user access privileges.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue working to improve and reevaluate the RA System user access privileges so the access reports are consistent and accurate. Due to the capacity issues experienced by the Department during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has identified several strategic initiatives necessary to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The Department is actively underway with a Cloud Migration project that will assist with transferring program infrastructure to the Cloud and provide improvements to business processes and application architecture.
Six-Month Status	The Department has corrected the data in this report.

Finding No.12: Appropriateness of Access Privileges	
Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management limit RA System user access privileges to only those functions that are appropriate and necessary for the users' assigned job duties.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues to work to establish and implement procedures that will document the review process and limit access privileges in the RA System. The Department has identified an Identity Management and Access Control project to establish procedures to restrict system users to only functions necessary for assigned job duties. Additionally, the Department is working to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to identify role-specific job duties.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by December 2022.

Finding No.13: Timely Deactivation of Access Privileges	
Auditor Recommendation	We recommend that Department management ensure that RA System user accounts are promptly deactivated upon employment separation or when no longer necessary.
DEO Response	<p>The Department concurs with the finding. The Department continues working to establish and implement a different process for the timely deactivation according to the system modernization efforts.</p> <p>The Department has identified two corrective actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department's Internal Security Unit (ISU) will update the Universal Security Officers Guide (USOG) to incorporate additional security procedures in relation to timely deactivation of accounts, as well as provide ongoing Security Officer Training to Departmental Security Officers (DSOs) to ensure business area's DSOs and Supervisors follow the procedures documented in the USOG. 2. Due to the capacity issues experienced by the Department during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has identified strategic initiatives necessary to be completed in order to position the RA program for long-term optimization. The Department is actively underway with a Cloud Migration project to assist with the migration of infrastructure to the Cloud and provide improvements to business processes and application architecture.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by December 2021.

Finding No.14: Other Security Controls - Logical Access, User Authentication, and Logging and Monitoring	
Auditor Recommendation	We again recommend that Department management improve certain security controls related to logical access, user authentication, and logging and monitoring for the RA System and related IT resources to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of RA System data and related IT resources.
DEO Response	The Department concurs with the finding. The Department will continue to evaluate and improve security controls to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of RA System data and IT resources. The Department has identified a Security Architecture Review Project to help ensure the RA application, underlying platform, associated operations, and development processes meet modern application security standards.
Six-Month Status	The Department is still on track to implement the corrective action by March 2022.