
January 2016

Performance Audit
Recommendations and Corrective
Actions for Audit: 11-1

Sex Offender Supervision:

Corrections' Caseloads Were
Largely in Accordance with
Statutory Requirements, but
Monitoring Tools Could Be
Improved

Dated: 01/10/2011

Overview

The SAO makes recommendations designed to improve the operations of state government. For our work to produce benefits, auditees or the General Assembly must implement these recommendations although, we cannot require them to do so. Nevertheless, a measure of the quality and persuasiveness of our performance audits is the extent to which these recommendations are accepted and acted upon. The greater the number of recommendations that are implemented, the more benefit will be derived from our audit work.

In 2010, the SAO began to follow-up on the recommendations issued in our performance audits. Experience has shown that it takes time for some recommendations to be implemented. For this reason, we perform our follow-up activities one and three years after the calendar year in which the audit report is issued. Our annual performance reports summarize whether we are meeting our recommendation implementation targets.

(http://auditor.vermont.gov/audits/recommendation_follow-up)

This report addresses the requirements of Act 155 to post the results of our recommendation follow-up work on our website. The report does not include follow-up on recommendations issued as part of the state's financial statement audit and the federally mandated Single Audit, which are performed by a contractor. However, our new contract for this work requires the contractor to provide the results of its recommendation follow-up in the future. Accordingly, we expect that future reports will contain this data.

Audit No., Name	Rec #	Recommendation	Follow-Up Date	Status & Date	Review Comments
11-1 Sex Offender Supervision: Corrections' Caseloads Were Largely in accordance with Statutory Requirements, but Monitoring Tools Could Be Improved 1/10/2011	1	The Department of Corrections (DOC) should develop criteria for when it is appropriate to assign sex offenders to be supervised by probation and parole officers who do not specialize in sex offender management.	12/1/2013	Partially Implemented 6/1/2012	DOC has not established criteria for when it is appropriate to assign sex offenders to be supervised by POs who do not specialize in sex offender management. However, per DOC official, all of such cases go through case staffing review process that involves review of pertinent information by Department of Corrections facility, probation and parole office and central office staff in order to make classification decisions about appropriate levels of supervision.
		2015	Per DOC official, a memo was issued to all district managers (DM) in August 2015 reinforcing the case staffing review process for assigning sex offenders to non-specialized POs. The memo states that all sex offenders will be assigned to a PO designated to supervise sex offenders unless a determination is made during the Central Level Sex Offender Release Staffing that the offender will be supervised by a non-specialized PO. In the case of sex offenders coming directly from court or when circumstances change during the course of supervision, this determination will be made by the Sex Offender Team Supervisor in collaboration with the Chief of the Vermont Program for Sexual Abuse and with agreement from the DM. However, DOC does not have written criteria for when or under what circumstances it is appropriate to assign sex offenders to be supervised by POs who do not specialize in sex offender management.		
	2	The Department of Corrections (DOC) should develop a report that tracks and clearly shows whether probation and parole officers' (PO) caseloads are within statutory limitations or modify an existing report to provide such information.	12/1/2013	Implemented	The current DOC Caseload Ratio Report includes the number of active and inactive cases assigned to probation officers. In addition, it compares the number of the assigned cases to the caseload limits of each probation officer and calculates the percentage of caseload capacity reached.
			No further follow-up is required because the recommendation was implemented		

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11-1 Sex Offender Supervision: Corrections' Caseloads Were Largely in Accordance with Statutory Requirements, but Monitoring Tools Could Be Improved 1/10/2011	3	<p>The Department of Corrections (DOC) should require probation and parole offices to establish written procedures for updating offender records in the DOC system, which would include responsibilities and standards related to the timely updating of offender records in the system.</p>	12/1/2013	Partially Implemented	<p>Per DOC, the Department's Probation and Parole Offices are not required to establish written procedures regarding timeliness of sex offender records updates in the DOC system. However, a number of the DOC Directives require system updates subsequent to case management activities, such as intake or offenders' residence checks.</p>
			2015	Partially Implemented	<p>DOC has provided written procedures for updating offender records but these procedures do not specify a standard to follow to ensure timely updates to the DOC system. For example, the ORAS implementation guidance document, dated 4/10/15, addresses the need for the need for risk assessments for offenders upon re-entry or release to the community or upon significant changes in their community status. The ORAS risk level is updated into the offender management system (OMS) to determine supervision levels in the community which allows DOC to review prior ORAS scores to see if the offender is making progress in the field. Directives issued by DOC from 2012 - 2015 also address the requirement for system updates. Examples include documenting (1) initial residence screenings for offenders being released on furlough and offenders held for lack of residence (2) community notification plan for high risk sex offenders and (3) contacts and communication regarding risk management supervision plans, treatment team decisions and supervision level adjustments.</p>

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11-1 Sex Offender Supervision: Corrections' Caseloads Were Largely in Accordance with Statutory Requirements, but Monitoring Tools Could Be Improved 1/10/2011	4	The Department of Corrections (DOC) should develop and implement system-specific training for field office personnel.	12/1/2013	Not Implemented	Per DOC, the Department is currently in the process of replacing its database. Little or no resources are allocated for purposes other than maintenance of the current system.
			2015	Implemented	DOC provided extensive training in the new Offender Management System (OMS) during the months of February and March of 2015 at 16 locations throughout the DOC correctional system which included Probation & Parole Offices, Correctional Facilities, and the DOC Central Office. Sessions included training in OMS 101, OMS case management, OMS programs and OMS CCO. Additionally, DOC provided OMS reference materials and lesson plans for our review which are available on-line for DOC staff.
	5	The Department of Corrections (DOC) should expeditiously devise an implementation strategy for its planned probation and parole officer (PO) training curriculum and the Probation and Parole Officer's Training and Resource Manual, outlining the tasks, milestones, and resources needed for their effective rollout.	12/1/2013	Implemented	DOC established a multi-faceted training approach, including basic instructions, online training, special competency trainings, annual and bi-annual conferences and on-going updates of DOC policies and directives. DOC training materials provide detailed overviews of its training curriculum and its milestones. Training progress of Department of Correction specialists is overseen by their supervisors and is monitored via Training Checklists and Training Record system.
			No further follow-up is required because the recommendation was implemented		