

UPDATE OF CORRECTIONS PRO-FILES SYSTEM

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Legislative Finance Committee
by

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the legislature has been frustrated by the lack of information that has been available in helping them make informed policy and financial decisions for the Department of Corrections. In an attempt to remedy the lack of data, the 1997 legislature approved a department request for an automation plan. This report gives a brief background on the department's automation plan and provides a status of the implementation of the automation plan.

BACKGROUND

The original database used by the Department of Corrections was developed in the late 1970s to capture information regarding offenders. The system was called ACIS (Adult Correctional Information System). The data captured by the system filled the basic needs of the department at the time, but the system was unwieldy in its ability to produce reports. Over the years, there became an increased need for: 1) improved tracking of offender statistics; 2) access to data to facilitate the department's management of offenders; 3) an ability to track data that would facilitate an analysis of the effectiveness of treatment programs and training; and 4) the ability to provide the legislature with better information for their use in making informed decisions.

During the 1997 legislative session, the Department of Corrections presented to the legislature a new proposal to update and expand the capabilities of ACIS and to remediate Y2K problems. The executive requested 7.5 FTE and approximately \$3.5 million general fund through HB 2. The 1997 legislature approved 7.5 FTE and \$0.8 million in HB 2 and \$1.89 million in HB 188 (the information technology bill for bonded projects) for a total of \$2.7 million for the 1999 biennium.

After the release of an audit on ACIS in the spring of 1997 and a resulting workflow analysis completed in April of 1998, the department decided to develop a new database system named PRO-Files (Programmed Reporting of Offender's Files) utilizing current technology, rather than update ACIS. The department believed that the new system would increase the ease of entering data and increase the accuracy of the data.

Table 1 shows the major components of the automation plan that were presented to the 1997 legislature as part of the automation package and various data elements that legislators were assured would be tracked under the new system.

Table 1 Department of Corrections Automation Plan	
Major components of the system:	
1.	Electronic fingerprint system. The new system will have the capability to rapidly determine the offender's identity by a match through the regional and national fingerprint databases.
2.	Development of infrastructure and electronically linking 25 locations
3.	Purchase or lease hardware/software to connect correctional facilities in Montana cities
4.	Upgrade the server to handle the additional modules that will capture the data
5.	Electronic imaging system. Offender photos are captured on the system and will be made available to the department, law enforcement, or other appropriate parties
6.	Integration of systems at the departments' of Public Health and Human Services, Justice, and the Judiciary so all departments have access to more detailed, comprehensive information
Various data goals to be tracked:	
7.	Boot camp information
8.	Juvenile data
9.	Intensive supervision data
10.	Probation and parole data, such as pre-sentence and hearing data
11.	Pre-release information
12.	Release rates by type of facility
13.	Average length of stay in secure custody or probation and parole
14.	Grievances and pending legal cases
15.	Average sentence by type of crime
16.	Number of offenders by type of crime
17.	Types of offenses by inmates in jail holding system
18.	Medical, mental health, and dental data
19.	Educational and training data
20.	Treatment plans
21.	Gang involvement

PRO-FILES BACKGROUND

PRO-Files is strictly a database. The department is currently concentrating on entering accurate and complete data for the current population. The system has been designed so that when data is entered into PRO-Files, ACIS is updated at the same time. To protect the integrity of the database, a companion system has been developed that will extract the requested data elements from the system and produce reports. These reports will be accessed through a web-based offender-reporting site. The site will be accessible to department personnel, law enforcement, and other appropriate parties. Non-confidential information will be available to the public through the website. This same reporting system can now extract many of the data elements listed in Table 1 from ACIS and produce reports.

STATUS

Timeline Status

A formal completion date was not established for the automation plan, although original discussions about the plan anticipated that the project would be complete by mid-2001. The department's current goal is to have ACIS fully retired and replaced by PRO-Files by the end of the 2003 biennium. Several factors contributed to the delay in the implementation of the department's automation plan. Some of the factors include: 1) the decision by the department to develop a new database system rather than update ACIS; 2) differing visions of the project between the programmers and management; and 3) having an outside analyst determine in November of 1999 that several major shortfalls needed to be corrected before the project could move forward. The department readily acknowledges that the development and implementation of the automation plan has not been problem free. The enormity of the project was underestimated and time was lost in the beginning stages.

Financial Status

As of the end of fiscal year 2000, \$2.5 million of the \$2.7 million appropriated for this project by the 1997 legislature had been expended. Of this amount, approximately \$0.5 million was expended to fix Y2K problems and the remainder was spent on the development and implementation of the department's automation plan. The \$2.5 million included funds for: 1) consultants and training; 2) the installation of fiber optic cable at Montana State Prison and Pine Hills; 3) the electronic linking of 25 department locations; 4) the purchase of software; 5) the purchase and installation of live fingerprint scan systems for Great Falls, Missoula, Glendive and Montana State Prison; 6) the purchase and installation of advanced video technology for booking and photo lineups; 7) the upgrade of the server; and 8) the upgrade and installation of more than 250 computers. Additionally, approximately \$400,000 has been included as part of the department's base budget for this project since 1998 for the 7.5 FTE funded by the 1997 legislature for the ongoing operating costs of the automation plan.

With all of the hardware, software, and infrastructure needs completed, no additional funds were requested for the 2001 biennium for this project and no funds have been requested in the department's EPP request for the 2003 biennium. Because programming is the only need remaining on this project, the department plans to continue work on developing the system within the existing budget and as resources allow.

Components of the System and Data Needs Status

The first four major components listed in Table 1 have been completed. These include: 1) the implementation of the electronic fingerprint system; 2) the development of the infrastructure and the electronic linking of 25 locations; 3) the

purchase or lease of hardware/software to connect correctional facilities throughout Montana; and 4) the upgrade of the server to handle the new database. The electronic imaging system (item 5 in Table 1) is in place and operable, but the department is in the process of ensuring there is sufficient line speed for the transmission of the photos. Item 6, integration of a criminal justice information network, is discussed in more detail later in this report, but at this time the departments are not integrated. Much of the information identified as the data needs of the new system (items 7 through 21 in Table 1) is warehoused in ACIS and will be warehoused in PRO-Files in the future. In the past, even though the information was captured in ACIS there was not the ability to extract the data elements separately to produce meaningful reports. In addition, the reliability of the data was questionable because ACIS was designed in a fashion that facilitated the entering of incomplete or inaccurate information. PRO-Files will capture all of this data which will be made available through a reporting system.

Table 2 Department of Corrections Phases of Automation Plan		
Phase	Description	Available
Phase I	Offender demographics	Nov. 1, 2000
Phase II	Offender movement	May 1, 2001
Phase III	Legal information	Nov. 1, 2001
Phase IV	Classification	May 1, 2002

Due to the complexity and magnitude of PRO-Files, the department made a decision to roll out the system in phases. Table 2 gives a brief explanation of what each of the first four phases is designed to provide and the timeline for rollout. Phases will be added as completion of phases I-IV nears. At this

time, Phase I is being tested with plans to have it in production by November 1, 2000. Subsequent phases are planned to be rolled out every 120 to 180 days, with ACIS being retired and fully replaced by PRO-Files at the end of the 2003 biennium.

To ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information in Phase III (legal information), the department plans to contract with 3 to 4 paralegals. The paralegals will hard key the information into PRO-Files from legal dockets. The department feels it is necessary to have personnel with legal expertise to enter this information. The cost for the contracted services will be supported within the current budget.

Table 3 melds Tables 1 and 2, illustrating which phase in PRO-Files will provide the data pledged to the 1997 legislature. As previously mentioned, the department now has the capability to extract a great deal of this data from ACIS. Therefore, even though the phase in PRO-Files may not be available, much of this information can be obtained through a reporting system that will obtain the information from ACIS.

Table 3		
Department of Corrections		
PRO-Files Phase Providing Data Goals		
Phase	Availability in PRO-Files	Various data goals to be tracked:
I-IV	Nov. 2000 - May 2002	Boot camp information
I-IV	Nov. 2000 - May 2002	Juvenile data
I-IV	Nov. 2000 - May 2002	Intensive supervision data
I-IV	Nov. 2000 - May 2002	Probation and parole data, such as pre-sentence and hearing data
I-IV	Nov. 2000 - May 2002	Pre-release information
II	May 2001	Release rates by type of facility
II	May 2001	Average length of stay in secure custody or probation and parole
III	Nov. 2001	Grievances and pending legal cases
IV	May 2002	Average sentence by type of crime
IV	May 2002	Number of offenders by type of crime
IV	May 2002	Types of offenses by inmates in jail holding system
IV+	?	Medical, mental health, and dental data
IV+	?	Educational and training data
IV+	?	Treatment plans
IV+	?	Gang involvement

Integration Status

The departments of Justice, Corrections, Health and Human Services, and the Courts are in a partnership to develop an integrated and automated criminal justice information network (the Montana Criminal Justice Information Services Project or MCJIS). An integrated system will allow the exchange and sharing of critical information among law enforcement and other governmental agencies and avoid duplication of entering and maintaining information. This system would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's law enforcement and would also be available to the local law enforcement and justice agencies.

Integrating business systems of different agencies with unique information needs has raised several challenges for the agencies. Plans for a pilot project of the Montana Criminal Justice Information Services Project were drafted in June of this year. Findings and recommendations from the pilot will be brought to the MCJIS Advisory Group in December 2000. The departments of Justice and Corrections hope to have some exchange of criminal justice information by this fall.

CONCLUSION

As with the development of most new systems, this project has not been problem free. It was stated earlier that \$2.5 million of the \$2.7 million appropriated for this project has been expended. At this time, it is difficult to evaluate whether the money

appropriated and expended will yield the expected results because the beginning phases of the system are only in the testing phase. However, the department is optimistic that with only programming needs remaining, the department will be able to: 1) complete the project without requesting any additional funds; and 2) meet the goals envisioned for this project. By the end of the 2003 biennium, the department expects to have fully replaced ACIS with PRO-Files.

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