

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

HIRING, TRAINING, AND STAFF

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION This report, issued in March 1997, contains the results of our performance audit of Hiring, Training, and Staff Development Programs, Department of Corrections (DOC).

AUDIT PURPOSE This audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency*.

BACKGROUND Hiring, training, and staff development programs consist of various programs within DOC that are responsible for the process by which corrections officers and other DOC employees are hired and trained to maintain and improve their skills. DOC's Personnel and Labor Relations Division has overall responsibility for selecting, hiring, and training corrections officers and for providing training to DOC administrative, professional, and clerical employees. Within

the Division, the Personnel Services Section is responsible for selecting and hiring entry level corrections officers based on criteria defined in the Correctional Officers' Training Act (COTA) and standards established by the Correctional Officers' Training Council*. The Training Section trains corrections officers in accordance with COTA and standards established by the Training Council.

The mission* of the hiring, training, and staff development programs, as required by COTA (Sections 791.501 - 791.517 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws*) and DOC policy, is to improve the initial and ongoing training and education of State and local corrections officers and other DOC employees, to provide for the certification of State corrections officers, and to develop standards and requirements for State and local corrections officers.

The hiring, training, and staff development programs' annual expenditures for training programs administered by the Training Section were \$10.5 million for fiscal year 1995-96. As of September 30, 1996, the hiring, training, and staff development programs had 40.5 employees to provide training services.

**AUDIT
OBJECTIVES
AND
CONCLUSIONS**

Audit Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of DOC's hiring programs for corrections officers and its training and staff development programs for all DOC personnel.

Conclusion: Based on our assessment, hiring, training, and staff development programs were generally effective in hiring corrections officers and in providing corrections officers and

other DOC employees with the opportunity to obtain new and ongoing training. However, DOC had not established the methods needed to determine if the training it provided was effective in achieving its mission. Our assessment disclosed one material condition*:

- DOC had not established a complete continuous quality improvement process* to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the training provided to corrections officers and other DOC employees (Finding 1).

DOC agreed and will comply with the corresponding recommendations. DOC will develop a process to obtain and monitor departure reasons for corrections officer trainees. DOC also will establish methods to ensure that program assessments are distributed to participants, turned in to the Training Division, and retained in accordance with DOC's retention and disposal schedule.

In addition, our assessment disclosed a reportable condition* related to whether an annual physical fitness test was necessary to determine if corrections officers were physically fit to perform their duties (Finding 2).

Audit Objective: To determine if DOC's hiring, training, and staff development programs complied with the applicable statute, rules, policies, and procedures.

Conclusion: DOC's hiring, training, and staff development programs generally complied with the applicable statute,

rules, policies, and procedures. However, our assessment disclosed two material conditions:

- DOC did not obtain substance abuse tests from some applicants applying for employment with DOC. DOC is required by statute to obtain a substance abuse test from applicants seeking employment with DOC. (Finding 3)

DOC agreed and will comply with the corresponding recommendation pending resolution of potential legal issues to ensure that substance abuse testing of applicants is performed pursuant to provisions of civil service rules and regulations and applicable collective bargaining agreements as required by statute.

- DOC had not approved formal written procedures for the decertification and subsequent recertification of corrections officers who did not meet training requirements and had not complied with its policy to monitor the annual training provided to DOC employees. (Finding 4)

DOC agreed and is in the process of complying with the corresponding recommendation as it has drafted a procedure regarding corrections officer certification, decertification, and recertification. DOC will also take steps to enforce compliance with its policy for monitoring the annual training provided to DOC employees.

In addition, our assessment disclosed reportable conditions related to the completion of corrections officer new employee

school, training committees*, on-the-job training program approvals, fire safety inspections, instructor training, and administrative rules. (Findings 5 through 10).

**AUDIT SCOPE
AND
METHODOLOGY**

Our audit scope was to examine the operations and the records of the hiring, training, and staff development programs of the Department of Corrections. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our methodology included examinations of hiring, training, and staff development records and activities covering the period October 1, 1993 through September 30, 1996.

We performed a preliminary survey to obtain an understanding of DOC's internal control structure* as it pertains to the effectiveness of the hiring, training, and staff development programs. We identified and reviewed the significant internal controls.

We also performed a survey of stakeholders* concerning the hiring, training, and staff development programs. The results of which are presented as supplemental information.

In addition, we examined the operations of the Personnel Services Section and analyzed the training and staff operations administered by the Training Section.

**AGENCY
RESPONSES
AND PRIOR AUDIT
FOLLOW-UP**

Our report contains 10 findings and 13 recommendations. DOC's preliminary response indicated that it agreed with all 13 recommendations and that it will take or has taken the necessary action to implement the recommendations.

DOC complied with 9 of 13 prior audit recommendations. The other 4 recommendations are repeated in this report.