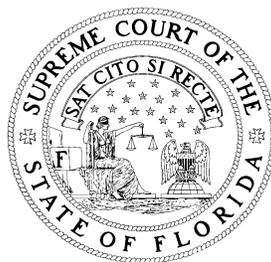


Florida State Courts System Office of Inspector General



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017-18



July 16, 2018

Inspector General's Message

I am pleased to present the annual report for the Office of Inspector General (OIG). As required by section 20.055(7), Florida Statutes, this report highlights the major activities and accomplishments of the OIG for the 2017-18 state fiscal year.

Through the diligence of the audit staff, we completed all the projects listed on our 2017-18 work plan including nine audits and three consulting engagements.

As this is my final annual report before retiring from state service, I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the Supreme Court of Florida for the opportunity to serve as its Inspector General for the last six years. During that time I have visited all 20 circuit courts and the five district appeal courts at least once. In my opinion, the State Court System is in good shape overall from an internal control perspective and I have been impressed with the quality of management and staff and the level of cooperation and willingness to improve they have demonstrated.



Greg White

Introduction

The OIG is an integral part of the State Courts System which consists of two levels of appellate courts (the Supreme Court and five district courts of appeal) and two trial court levels (20 circuit and 67 county courts). The Chief Justice presides as the chief administrative officer of the State Courts System.

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) was created to serve as the liaison between the court system and the legislative branch, the executive branch, the auxiliary agencies of the court, and national court research and planning agencies. The OSCA is also responsible for preparing the operating budget for the State Courts System, projecting the need for new judges, and maintaining the uniform case reporting system in order to provide information about activities of the judiciary.

The purpose of the OIG is to provide a central point for coordination of and responsibility for activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in the State Courts System. The Inspector General is charged with the following duties and responsibilities, while also ensuring that an appropriate balance is maintained between these activities:

- Direct, supervise and coordinate audits, investigations and management reviews relating to administrative and financial operations.
- Conduct or supervise other activities that promote economy

and efficiency in the administration of financial operations.

- Keep the Chief Justice informed concerning fraud, abuses and deficiencies relating to administrative and financial operations, and recommend corrective actions.
- Ensure effective coordination and cooperation between the Auditor General, federal auditors, and other governmental bodies with a view toward avoiding duplication.

Audits

Providing the State Courts System with internal audits is a critical part of the mission of our office. The audits are planned and carried out in accordance with an annual work plan, which is approved by the Chief Justice. Audits are conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* published by the Institute of Internal Auditors. In part, these standards require that engagements be performed with proficiency and due professional care, and that staff exhibit an impartial, unbiased attitude and avoid conflicts of interest. Audits are performed to identify, report, and recommend corrective action for control deficiencies or non-compliance with laws, policies and procedures. Additionally, audits are conducted to evaluate and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative functions.

The OIG completed audits of one district court of appeal, and seven circuit courts during 2017-18. The objectives of these operational audits were to determine whether: the courts complied with administrative policies and procedures and applicable state statutes; internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded and financial and operational information is reliable; and, current court operations and processes support management objectives and encourage economical use of resources.

Fourth District Court of Appeal:

Report issued April 19, 2018. The Fourth District Court of Appeal's system of internal controls and procedures were found to be satisfactory and the court generally complied with policies and procedures, as well as applicable state statutes. Our audit did not disclose any material findings. We provided management comments for improving travel voucher and leave without pay processing to which management responded appropriately.

First Judicial Circuit:

Report issued October 13, 2017. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. We noted the good use the circuit made of information technology resources.

Second Judicial Circuit:

Report issued August 1, 2017. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded, and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules, as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. There were no material findings.

Eighth Judicial Circuit:

Report issued January 3, 2018. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded, and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules, as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. Immaterial management comments regarding strengthening internal controls in the area of purchasing and the need for better timesheet documentation along with certain travel related issues were provided for management consideration. Management responded appropriately to the comments.

Twelfth Judicial Circuit:

Report issued June 29, 2018. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded, and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules, as well as applicable statutes. Overall

operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. We offered management comments regarding leave and attendance reporting and travel processing which were appropriately responded to by management.

Fourteenth Judicial Circuit:

Report issued September 27, 2017. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded and that financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. The circuit uses Court Innovation funds to provide financial assistance to local interpreters who would not otherwise be able to pay the fees associated with the certification process. This recruitment effort as resulted in contractual agreements with one certified interpreter, one provisionally certified interpreter, and several who have attained "registered" status.

Seventeenth Judicial Circuit:

Report issued March 28, 2018. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded, and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules, as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state

resources. There were no material findings. Immaterial management comments regarding travel related issues and leave and attendance documentation were provided for management consideration. Management responded appropriately to the comments.

Twentieth Judicial Circuit:

Report issued June 15, 2018. Internal controls provided reasonable assurance that assets were safeguarded, and financial and operational information was reliable. The circuit complied with administrative policies, procedures, and rules, as well as applicable statutes. Overall operations supported the goals and objectives of the State Courts System, and management promoted the effective and efficient use of state resources. There were no material findings. Immaterial management comments regarding travel and personnel issues were provided for management consideration. Management responded appropriately to the comments. Overall, we were very impressed with the control environment at the circuit and the tone of its leadership.

In addition to the court operational audits, we completed an audit of the **contract between the State Courts System and the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association providing funding for extended-released injectable Naltrexone treatment.**

The report, issued February 12, 2018, stated that internal controls provided reasonable assurance that state funds are safeguarded and financial information is reliable. The extended-released injectable Naltrexone program

generally complied with administrative policies, procedures, rules, and state statutes. To further strengthen financial controls and better comply with statutory guidance, we included a recommendation to strengthen administration of advance payments.

Response Coordination and Follow-up:

The OIG coordinates information requests and responses to findings from audits conducted by the Office of the Auditor General and other external entities. The OIG is also required to report on the status of corrective actions taken regarding external audit recommendations. There were no Auditor General reports regarding the State Courts System issued during the year. There were also no outstanding findings which required follow-up action.

In accordance with professional auditing standards, the OIG also reviews the status of open internal audit findings within six months of the audit report issue date. The courts and Office of the State Courts Administrator have been diligent in addressing our findings and management comments.

Consulting Activities

Providing consulting services is an efficient, effective, and proactive way the OIG can provide analysis and insight into issues that arise. These services include performing management reviews, advising in the development of policies and procedures, collecting and analyzing data, and assessing the validity and reliability of performance measures.

The OIG completed a risk assessment of court system uniform data reporting, collected and prepared consolidated financial reports on the three Florida judge conferences, and developed and provided a presentation to the statewide court administrative conference.

Investigations

Investigations by their very nature are reactive rather than proactive. The Inspector General is required to initiate, conduct, supervise and coordinate investigations designed to detect, deter, prevent, and eradicate fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, and other abuses in the State Courts System. The investigations conducted by the OIG are administrative (non-criminal), and generally involve alleged violations of State law or applicable rules and regulations. Any possible violations of criminal law are reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Complaints alleging misconduct by judges and attorneys are referred to the Judicial Qualifications Commission and the Florida Bar, respectively.

We received a number of complaints that either did not warrant an investigation, or were outside the jurisdiction of the OIG and thus referred to the appropriate entities for disposition.

OIG Staff

Greg White, MBA, CIA, CIG,
CGAP
Inspector General

Jessica Faison, BA, CIGA, CGAP
Senior Internal Auditor

Giovanni Wolmers, BA, CIGA
Internal Auditor

CIA – Certified Internal Auditor
CIG – Certified Inspector General
CGAP – Cert. Government Auditing Professional
CIGA – Cert. Inspector General Auditor
MBA– Master’s in Business Admin.
BA – Bachelor’s Degree

Other Activities

During 2017-18, the OIG staff participated in the following organizations:

- ❖ Institute of Internal Auditors
- ❖ Association of Government Accountants
- ❖ Association of Inspectors General

All staff members obtained appropriate continuing professional education as required by statute and professional auditing standards. Professional certifications from the Institute of Internal Auditors and Association of Inspectors General were earned by staff during the year.

Upcoming Year

During fiscal year 2018-19, the OIG plans to conduct nine new audits. We will provide consulting services in support of State Courts System operational priorities and, when appropriate, we will investigate complaints.

Mission of the Office of Inspector General

To proactively perform engagements designed to add value and improve the programs and operations of the State Courts System.

Contact

Office of Inspector General
Supreme Court Building
500 South Duval Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1925