



Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

Staci A. Henshaw, CPA
Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

March 12, 2021

The Honorable Jeffrey C. Rountree
Chief Judge
City of Newport News Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Audit Period: July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020
Court System: City of Newport News
Judicial District: Seventh

We are performing a statewide audit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts. During our review of this court, we conducted certain audit procedures, as we deemed appropriate.

Management of this court is an important part of the court's accountability since you are responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls and complying with applicable laws and regulations. During our review, we noted certain matters that required management's attention and corrective action. These matters include the following:

Deposit Funds and Remit State Collections Timely

Repeat: No

The Clerk did not deposit collections timely during the audit period and delayed the remittance of state collections. Not making bank deposits timely increases the risk of loss of funds and contributes to delays in state remittances, which are required by the Code of Virginia to be done twice each week or when collections reach \$5,000. The Clerk should make bank deposits daily as required by the court's accounting manual and should remit state funds as required by the Code of Virginia.

Request Tax Set-Off Refunds

Repeat: No

The Clerk did not submit claims to the Virginia Department of Taxation (Taxation) for tax set-off of refunds totaling \$7,159 for delinquent court fines and costs, resulting in a loss of revenue to the Commonwealth and locality. A court must submit claims for set-off of tax refunds through Taxation's

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automated accounting system. The Clerk should use the tax refund set-off process to maximize collections as required by the Code of Virginia.

Properly Bill and Collect Court Costs

Repeat: No

The Clerk and her staff did not properly bill and collect court costs. In seven of 47 cases tested (15%), we noted the following:

- In three cases, costs of \$1,439 were not certified to the circuit court.
- Defendants in two cases were not charged costs of \$331 and, in one case, the defendant was overcharged costs of \$120.
- The Clerk did not bill the locality for attorney fees for one local case. Instead, the Clerk incorrectly billed the Commonwealth, which paid \$120.

The Clerk should correct the specific cases noted above and should establish a system of review to minimize the likelihood of billing errors going undetected. In all cases, the Clerk should bill and collect court costs in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Clerk and her staff during this engagement.

Staci A. Henshaw
AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

SAH: clj

cc: The Honorable Thomas W. Carpenter, Judge
The Honorable Judith A. Kline, Judge
The Honorable Rebecca M. Robinson, Judge
Patsy A. Ewell, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia