



Staci A. Henshaw, CPA
Auditor of Public Accounts

Commonwealth of Virginia

Auditor of Public Accounts

P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Deborah S. Tinsley
Chief Judge
County of Louisa Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Audit Period: July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021
Court System: County of Louisa
Judicial District: Sixteenth

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 the following matter requiring management's attention and corrective action.

Properly Bill Court-Appointed Attorney Fees

Repeat: No

The Clerk and her staff improperly charged defendants for attorney fees. Attorneys appointed to represent indigent defendants may, at the judges' discretion, receive compensation for their services that exceeds the statutory maximum set forth in § 19.2-163 of the Code of Virginia. However, the Clerk may only bill defendants up to the statutory limit. For three of 13 attorney invoices tested (23%), the Clerk and her staff charged the defendants a total of \$950 for attorney fees above the statutory maximum.

The Clerk and her staff should correct the specific cases noted above and seek additional instruction from Department of Judicial Services of the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia related to the billing of attorney fees. In all cases, the Clerk should bill court-appointed attorney fees in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

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

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cc: The Honorable Gilbert Berger, Judge
Toni Seay, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia