



Commonwealth of Virginia

Walter J. Kucharski, Auditor

**Auditor of Public Accounts
P.O. Box 1295
Richmond, Virginia 23218**

December 9, 2010

The Honorable Lauri D. Hogge
Chief Judge
City of Norfolk Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
800 East City Hall Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23510-2727

Audit Period: July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010
Court System: City of Norfolk
Judicial District: Fourth

We are performing a statewide audit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations 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 included:

Recover Costs for Public Defenders

The Clerk did not recoup from the locality the state funds used to pay public defenders when they represented defendants charged with local offenses as required by Section 19.2-163 of the Code of Virginia. In our review of 17 cases, the Clerk failed to bill the locality for five cases totaling \$435 of Public Defenders fees paid by the Commonwealth.

We recommend the Clerk research all similar cases and bill the locality for the applicable public defender fees. Further, we recommend the Clerk work with the Office of the Executive Secretary to improve oversight in these billing practices.

Properly Record and Collect Costs

The Clerk failed to charge any costs to defendants in four of 11 cases tested resulting in potential state and local losses of \$651. Sections 19.2-163 and 17.1-275 of the Code of Virginia establish fees charged to defendants to recover the costs of prosecution. We recommend the Clerk correct these individual accounts, notify defendants of owed amounts, and provide additional training to staff to ensure these costs are appropriately charged and collected.

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We acknowledge the cooperation extended to us by the Court during this engagement.

AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

WJK:clj

cc: The Honorable M. Randolph Carlson III, Judge
The Honorable Joseph P. Massey, Judge
The Honorable Michelle J. Atkins, Judge
The Honorable William P. Williams, Judge
Debra A. Hill, Clerk
Paul F. DeLosh, Director of Judicial Services
Supreme Court of Virginia