

**CONCLUSION:** MDOC maintains unreliable, inaccurate, and incomplete data and records for some offenders under the state's custody, which could impact decisions made by internal and external stakeholders (e.g., MDOC staff, the Legislature) and the care and rehabilitation of offenders.



## BACKGROUND

**MISS. CODE ANN. § 47-5-10 (1972)** designates MDOC as the state agency responsible for accepting adult offenders committed by the courts for incarceration, care, custody, treatment, and rehabilitation. As part of its responsibilities, MDOC must maintain up-to-date and complete records for all adult offenders sentenced to its custody and housed within 68 correctional facilities across the state.

MDOC has three main sources for maintaining an offender's record, including:

- **Offendertrak** (i.e., adult offender database management information system);
- **Legato** (i.e., electronic filing cabinet); and,
- **hard copy records.**

MDOC's Division of Records creates an offender's record upon entry, and facility staff across the state have the responsibility of editing and updating these records.

It is critical that offender records and data be complete, accurate, valid, confidential, and available so that internal and external stakeholders can make effective, data-driven decisions regarding offenders.



## KEY FINDINGS

- **MDOC has limited controls over user access and permissions, which has resulted in duplicate user accounts and account errors.**

MDOC does not ensure that user access and permissions are aligned with current job responsibilities. Further, it does not consistently assign, update, and remove users from the system, which could affect the security and integrity of offender data.

- **Data in Offendertrak does not consistently match the source documentation scanned into Legato. As a result, some offender records include incomplete, inconsistent, and missing information.**

PEER sampled 100 active offender records and identified several instances of incomplete, missing, and nonmatching offender data, including: missing documentation required by state law and/or MDOC policy, poorly scanned documents in Legato, missing or conflicting level of education data, outdated or missing pictures of offenders, nonmatching social security numbers, and misspelled or incorrect offender names.

- **MDOC's offender program data is unreliable, inaccurate, and incomplete. This limits the effectiveness and efficiency of rehabilitation and re-entry decisions made by MDOC.**

In the sample of 100 active offender records, 66 offenders participated in a program while incarcerated (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse program). None of the records for the 66 offenders who participated in a program were complete and accurate in Offendertrak and/or Legato. For example, records included incorrect dates of program completion and missing certificates of completion.

- **Data in Offendertrak is not consistently updated for all offenders, resulting in outdated and inaccurate records.**

For example, PEER's sample of 100 active offender records resulted in the identification of a deceased offender (as of November 2021) listed as active by MDOC. This offender was housed in another state and never served time with MDOC; however, he was still under the state's jurisdiction. MDOC did not properly maintain this offender's record by determining his status or location.

- **Other data issues observed by PEER include:**
  - unclear and erroneous Offendertrak reports, issues with disciplinary and incident reports, inconsistent reporting of escapees, impossible recorded ages, and system errors in sentence computation when updating some offender records.
- **As a result of MDOC's unreliable data:**
  - the Legislature might not effectively use MDOC's data to make the most informed decisions regarding policy and the funding of the state's correctional system;
  - MDOC staff cannot ensure they are making the most effective and efficient decisions regarding the management of offenders and operation of facilities; and,
  - offenders could be improperly classified, housed in an inappropriate or dangerous location, incarcerated beyond their release date, not earning credit for programming, and unable to effectively re-enter society upon release.
- **Reasons for MDOC's unreliable data include:**
  - issues with Offendertrak (e.g., the system is regularly unavailable to facility staff, produces erroneous reports and incorrect release dates, and lacks automation needed to identify potential data errors or inconsistencies);
  - issues with MDOC's management and processes (e.g., lack of agreement as to which source constitutes an offender's master record, limited training on the use of systems, and inefficient and inconsistent policies and procedures); and,
  - other external issues (e.g., systems at regional facilities, private prisons, and county jails do not interface with Offendertrak).
- **Offendertrak is an outdated and inefficient legacy system that is nearing the end of its useful life and will no longer be supported by the system's vendor as of June 30, 2025.**

MDOC has not begun to plan for transitioning to a new offender management information system. The goals of a new system should be to collect data that is structured to facilitate analysis that can be used by MDOC, prison facility staff, and policymakers to make more informed decisions regarding offenders, and ensure that data entered into the system is accurate and complete.



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Legislature*

To increase the integrity of MDOC's data, the Legislature should consider enacting legislation to require the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) to provide special assistance to MDOC, including but not limited to updating all offender records and planning, selecting, and procuring a new offender management information system. To fund this assistance, the Legislature should consider requiring MDOC to pay ITS expenditures associated with the project. ITS shall itemize its expenditures for each fiscal year in which they are incurred.

### *MDOC*

MDOC should improve its management of offender data by: implementing internal controls (e.g., updating user roles and permissions across all facilities, defining what source constitutes the master record), conducting quality assurance on information produced in its reports, annually reviewing offender programs to ensure proper documentation, and providing annual training for all users on how to effectively use the data systems.