



**Office of the Secretary**  
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## **SECRETARIAL DIRECTIVE**

**SUBJECT:** Data-driven Decision-Making

**NUMBER:** 2019-07

**SUPERSEDES:** New

**APPLICABILITY:** All Department of Corrections employees, especially those involved in data collection, data quality, and application development

**REFERENCE:** Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-43-108, 25-43-403  
12-1-101; AR 854 Research and  
Experimentation; and AR 1.9 Research  
and Program Evaluation

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**ISSUED BY:** Wendy Kelley

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 18, 2019

### **I. POLICY:**

As the executive head of the Department of Corrections (“Department”), it is the responsibility of the Secretary to facilitate a consistent approach to data and application development within the Department. This approach considers the statewide importance of data-driven decision making, and ensures collaboration across the entities within the Department.

### **II. PURPOSE:**

This directive is intended to instill and promote a culture of data-driven decision making within the Department. By improving information sharing and coordination efforts relating to data and application development, the Department can better serve its stakeholders.

### **III. PROCEDURES:**

#### **A. Secretarial Designee**

1. The Secretary’s designee for facilitating a Department-wide approach to data and application development within the department is the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff will supervise a Research and Planning Section tasked with supporting the Department’s data and application development activities within a shared services delivery model.

2. The Chief of Staff has the delegated authority to approve and prioritize data-related projects and system enhancements within the Department. The Chief of Staff may, at his or her discretion, further delegate this role to subordinate staff.

#### B. Data Collection and Performance Measures

1. Each entity within the Department will utilize evidenced-based or industry-recognized performance measures to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of their programs and services.
2. Each entity will develop a system for the collection of measurable data for their established performance measures.
3. The Chief of Staff, in consultation with the Secretary and Directors (or comparable position) within each entity, will establish a distribution schedule, and the format, for reporting the performance measures within the Department.
4. \*\*Recidivism will be used as a performance measure within the Divisions responsible for maintaining the custody or supervision of offenders.
  - a. The Office of the Secretary will coordinate the Department's recidivism reporting.
  - b. Pursuant to A.C.A. § 12-1-101, recidivism will be defined as any criminal act that results in an individual's rearrest, reconviction, or return to incarceration, with or without a new sentence, during a three-year period following their release from a correctional facility or a community correction center.

#### C. Research and Program Evaluation

1. Entities within the Department are encouraged to engage in research and program evaluation activities outside of those specifically referenced herein.
2. Entities within the Department are encouraged to support outside programs of research and program evaluation and similar activities. Researchers must protect the privacy of individual employees, inmates, offenders, and other involved parties; in addition to their records. Researchers must comply with all policy and legal guidance concerning their activities.
3. Entities within the Department will not engage in, nor approve, research activities which involve either medical or pharmaceutical experimentation of inmates or offenders.
4. Research and program evaluation or similar activities involving two (2) or more entities within the Department require the approval of the entity's Director (or comparable position) and the Chief of Staff. In determining the approval of a research or program evaluation activity, the Chief of Staff will consider the impact of the activity on the Department's operations. Consideration will also be given to

how the project relates to the implementation of legislation, grants, and to its role in promoting statewide priorities such as reentry or interdepartmental data sharing.

Note: Research and program evaluation or similar activities involving one (1) entity only require the approval of that entity's Director (or comparable position).

#### D. Business Intelligence Tools

1. Entities within the Department are encouraged to utilize business intelligence tools to support their operations. Business intelligence tools are those which generally provide an organization with the ability to:
  - a. Collect data from multiple sources;
  - b. Compile the data in such a way that supports analysis;
  - c. Develop and run queries of the data; and
  - d. Construct reports, dashboards, or other data visualizations.
2. The Secretary will evaluate and approve the use of business intelligence tools within the Department. This includes those tools in use on the initial effective date of this directive.

#### E. Application Development and Enhancement

1. The Department will continue its use of an integrated electronic offender management information system.
  - a. A program of continuous improvement will be maintained to ensure that the system remains reflective of industry trends and maximizes utilization of the Department's limited resources.
  - b. The management of any maintenance, support, or development agreements for the system will be coordinated by the Chief of Staff and the Department's Chief Technology Officer.
2. Submission of Enhancements
  - a. Each entity within the Department will designate a single individual authorized to propose enhancements to the offender management information system.
  - b. The entities within the Department are encouraged to establish and consider the feedback from user groups when developing enhancement proposals. These groups should be comprised of subject-matter employees who are directly impacted by the functionality of the system.

### 3. Approval and Prioritization of Enhancements

- a. The approval thresholds for enhancements are contained within Attachment 1.
- b. The prioritization of submitted enhancements will be made by the Chief of Staff, subject to direction from the Secretary. Priority setting shall include the following:
  - i. The Chief of Staff will chair an interdepartmental working group comprised of staff drawn from employees involved in application development. The working group is tasked with encouraging collaboration between these entities and advising the Chief of Staff on prioritization.
  - ii. In determining the priority of a project, the Chief of Staff will consider the impact of the project on the Department's operations. Consideration will also be given to how the project relates to the implementation of legislation, grants, and to its role in promoting statewide priorities such as reentry or interdepartmental data sharing.

#### F. Data Quality

1. Ensuring the quality of the data used by the Department will be a priority for all employees.
2. Before receiving access to the offender management and information system, an employee will receive notice regarding the Department's expectation regarding data quality.
3. The Chief of Staff will work with the Directors (or a comparable position) within each entity to determine data quality priorities for each entity. Strategies will be implemented to track progress toward addressing those priorities.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION:**

The entities within the Department are directed to review their existing operational policies and ensure that those policies reflect the guidance contained within this Secretarial Directive.

#### **V. ATTACHMENT:**

Application Development Approval Thresholds

**Attachment 1**

Application Development Approval Thresholds		
Number of Entities Impacted	Total Cost of Enhancement	Approval Required
One (1)	Greater than \$7,500 (Less than \$7,500 Entity Director Only)	Entity Director and Chief of Staff
(Two) 2 or more	\$5,000 to \$15,000 (Less than \$5,000 Entity Directors Only)	Entity Directors and Chief of Staff
Any	\$15,000 or More	Entity Directors and Secretary