

# Memorandum



**Date:** June 25, 2010

**To:** James K. Loftus, Director  
Miami-Dade Police Department

**From:** Jennifer Glazer-Moon, Special Assistant/  
Director, Office of Strategic Business Management *Jennifm*

**Subject:** Court Services Bureau – Operational Process Analysis

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Attached is the final report on the operational process analysis in the Court Services Bureau.

Your staff consistently demonstrated professionalism and a willingness to explore creative solutions for streamlining current processes. Please let us know if you would like assistance implementing any of the recommendations contained in this report.

If you have questions regarding the report, please contact me at 305-375-5143.

Attachment

c: Alina Hudak, Assistant County Manager

jgm04910

# **Miami-Dade Police Department Court Services Bureau Operational Process Analysis**

*Miami-Dade County  
Office of Strategic Business Management  
May 2010*



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*Prepared by Bill Busutil, Amy Horton-Tavera, and Paula Romo*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Court Services Bureau (CSB) is responsible for processing and serving various types of court papers (subpoenas, foreclosures, divorce papers, eviction notices, etc.) to residents throughout Miami-Dade County. It also coordinates the recovery of certain police department costs from inmates convicted of felonies, among other functions.

MDPD asked the Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM) to help them eliminate backlogs and inefficiencies in these processes. To achieve this, OSBM conducted an operational process analysis that included:

- an activity analysis to determine the costs of all major processes in the Court Services Bureau (CSB),
- a process analysis in which each of the Bureau's major processes was mapped, measured and evaluated, and
- a process redesign exercise in which findings, conclusions, recommendations and implementation strategies were developed to:
  - streamline operations,
  - minimize backlogs,
  - improve service quality, efficiency and effectiveness,
  - make effective use of available technology, and
  - address staff deployment and staffing levels to meet ongoing work demand.

A complete list of recommendations developed by the OSBM project team is detailed in the body of this report; a summary of key recommendations follows.

### **Key Recommendations**

#### Performance Measurement

In most cases, CSB's performance targets for output measures do not correspond to customer demand or output capacity. OSBM recommends updating the output measures to more closely reflect these factors.

OSBM also recommends that CSB begin tracking and reporting a series of new input, output and efficiency measures for: customer service, office operations, field operations, and cost recovery.

#### Customer Service

- *Public Awareness* – Currently, customers are not given clear information regarding the expected turnaround time for the delivery of writs. This often heightens customers' frustration, and increases both call volumes and the number of customers who visit the downtown office in person to ask about the status of their writs. OSBM recommends that the CSB define the expected

turnaround times for each type of writ, and communicate this information to their customers through all available communication channels.

- *Information Quality on the CSB Website and on Written Materials* – The project team found that information on CSB’s website, flyers and forms is often incomplete (lacking contact information, etc.), and difficult to understand (legal jargon, etc.). OSBM recommends redesigning the CSB webpage to provide information in simple language that is easy to understand.

## Office Operations

- *Manual Data Entry* – The CSB and the Clerk of Courts (COC) each has its own system for capturing writ information; data transfer between the two systems is limited. Under the current system, CSB personnel are required to enter individuals’ contact information that appears on writs into its system, and COC personnel are required to re- enter service disposition information into its system after CSB completes its field work. This causes delays in the delivery of writs, and unnecessary re-work for COC personnel after the field work has been completed. OSBM recommends that the transfer of writ disposition information be automated, to eliminate the need for COC personnel to re-enter that information. It is also recommended that COC personnel enter individuals’ contact information in its system prior to sending the information to CSB. This will eliminate those data entry requirements at CSB and the associated delays.
- *The Three-Part Form* – Currently, key writ information is documented on a three-part form, using carbon copy paper, and requiring a dot matrix printer. This configuration results in very slow printing speed, which produces significant bottlenecks. Due to its age and outdated technology, replacing parts on this printer is very costly. OSBM recommends a two-phased solution. Phase 1 would involve redesigning the three part form to make it compatible with modern printing and copying equipment. Phase 2 would involve transitioning to a near-paperless system that would enable field staff to transmit writ information via wireless technology (see the next recommendation below). Under this proposed system, printing would only be required to send writ information to the customer.
- *Laptops or Hand-Held Devices for Field Personnel* – Currently, CSB field personnel document their work on the three-part form, and on manual logs. This limits CSB’s ability to provide current writ status information to its customers, and causes unnecessary re-work for office personnel, who must enter manually generated data into the system after they receive the paperwork from the field. OSBM recommends that CSB explore the feasibility of providing laptops or other hand-held devices with immediate download capability to field personnel. This would enable real-time updates on the status of writs, and eliminate unnecessary re-work for CSB’s office staff.

## Field Activities

- *Automated Routing* – Currently, routing of field visits is done manually, by individual process servers or police officers. The Enterprise Technology Services Department (ETSD) currently holds an enterprise-wide license for ArcLogistics, an automated desktop routing software product designed to maximize routing efficiency. OSBM recommends that MDPD work with ETSD to determine the feasibility of implementing ArcLogistics for unenforceable writs. If implemented successfully, ArcLogistics should be considered for the enforceable writs section in the future.
- *4 x 10 Work Schedules* – CSB field staff currently work five days per week, eight hours per day, and spend approximately two hours per day on “in the office” activities at the beginning and end of each day. They also experience unproductive time each day driving to their first delivery location, and driving back to CSB Headquarters after their last delivery. OSBM recommends that CSB implement a 4 x 10 work schedule on a pilot basis and monitor the impacts on productivity; it is estimated that this recommendation could increase available time in the field by up to 7.5 percent.
- *Start and/or End the Day in the Field* – All field staff currently start and end their work day at CSB Headquarters, located at 140 West Flagler Street. Under this process, a typical field staff member will spend a total of one to two hours per day driving to the first delivery location, and returning to CSB Headquarters after delivering the last writ of the day. OSBM recommends that whenever possible, CSB allow field staff to begin and/or end their day in the field by: A) using satellite locations as pick-up/drop-off points for writs, B) arranging for morning and afternoon shift personnel to meet in the field and “hand-off” their paperwork to one another, or C) utilizing Court Support Specialists as document couriers.
- *Eliminating Specialization of Enforceable Writs* – Officers in the Enforceable Writs Section currently specialize in one of three writ types: evictions, executions and domestic violence injunctions (DVI’s). This causes scheduling inefficiencies, lengthy drive times and limitations in work distribution. OSBM recommends that all Officers in the Enforceable Writs Section be cross-trained to handle all three writ types, and that the work in this Section be distributed and scheduled accordingly.
- *Employee Incentives* – After MDPD implements the approved recommendations and eliminates its current backlogs in the delivery of writs, OSBM recommends that the department explore the feasibility of implementing: A) an employee recognition program that rewards efficiency for administrative employees as well as field staff, and B) a program that would allow field staff and/or office

employees to go home after they have completed their work for the day. CSB staff expressed a belief that under this program, field productivity would increase significantly. Should such a program be implemented, the Bureau must conduct frequent, random audits to determine whether service quality is maintained or improved, and whether employee or public safety are compromised. If it is determined that the program is failing on either of these measures, it should be discontinued immediately. This program should also be discontinued if any of the bureau's target turnaround times for delivery of writs are not being achieved, or, if for any reason, backlogs begin to re-occur.

### Cost Recovery

- *Flat Fee for Police Costs* – Individuals who have been sentenced for certain types of crimes may be ordered to pay the cost of police resources consumed in the investigation and prosecution of the crimes. Currently, those costs are tracked throughout MDPD on a case by case basis. OSBM recommends that MDPD explore the feasibility of imposing a flat fee for each type of offense. This would eliminate the need for detailed tracking and accounting, and possibly increase revenue to the County.

### Organizational Structure

- *Organizational Placement of the Cost Recovery Unit* – OSBM recommends that CSB consider reassigning the cost recovery function to an alternate bureau whose core mission is more consistent with cost recovery.
- *Transferring the Financial Systems Unit to Administration* – Currently, the Financial Systems Unit is located in the Enforceable Writs Section, and reports to a Lieutenant whose primary area of expertise is Police work. OSBM recommends that this unit be transferred to the Administrative Section.
- *Consolidation of Supervisory Responsibilities* – The high cost of management and supervision in this bureau is primarily attributable to the large number of squads, each of which requires a supervisor. After successful implementation of the various automation recommendations, OSBM recommends that CSB reorganize with fewer squads, and reassign former squad supervisors to field activity within CSB if there is sufficient work demand, or elsewhere within MDPD.

## **BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Court Services Bureau (CSB) is responsible for processing and serving various types of court papers (subpoenas, foreclosures, divorce papers, eviction notices, etc.) to residents throughout Miami-Dade County. It also provides security services for all court facilities within the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, and coordinates the recovery of certain police department costs from inmates convicted of felonies. In Fiscal Year 2008-09, the CSB had a total of 174 budgeted positions, including 96 sworn and 78 civilian positions.

The CSB is currently experiencing significant backlogs in processing and serving court papers; for some types of documents, such as evictions, unusual backlogs have resulted from the economic downturn. Consequently, MDPD asked the Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM) to conduct an operational process analysis. At the outset of this project, the Bureau's management team believed very strongly that it lacked sufficient personnel resources to keep up with increasing work demand, particularly during the recent economic downturn. It also believed significant efficiencies could be achieved by upgrading technology and other office equipment. MDPD engaged OSBM to conduct an objective analysis of the major processes in the CSB, and to develop a combination of operational and staffing solutions that would minimize the Bureau's current backlog while improving operational efficiency.

The key project objectives were to:

- determine the costs of all major processes and activities in the Bureau.
- map, measure and analyze processes for preparing and serving enforceable and non-enforceable writs.
- develop findings, conclusions, recommendations and implementation strategies that would:
  - streamline operations and improve processes wherever possible;
  - minimize backlog(s);
  - improve service quality, efficiency and effectiveness;
  - make effective use of technology; and
  - address staffing levels and the deployment of existing resources to meet ongoing work demand.

## **APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

The OSBM project team worked very closely with CSB's management team and knowledge workers to analyze its various processes. Specifically, OSBM:

- developed a comprehensive activity-based cost model for selected CSB processes. This cost model displays how CSB allocates its personnel resources across the various operational processes;
- facilitated a series of work sessions in which each major process was mapped, measured and evaluated;
- facilitated additional work sessions and worked closely with key members of the management team to develop a preliminary list of operational and organizational recommendations;
- presented preliminary recommendations to the CSB and MDPD management teams; and
- finalized the recommendations after receiving the management teams' guidance and input.

## OVERVIEW OF COURT SERVICES BUREAU FUNCTIONS

### Service of Writs

The CSB acts as the Miami-Dade County Sheriff in serving various types of court papers, or writs, throughout Miami-Dade County. Writs are filed in a court of law, most typically in Miami-Dade County but occasionally in a neighboring county or, potentially, any legally recognized court in the world. Each writ is one of two major types:

- *Non-enforceable writs* may be served by civilian (non-sworn) employees of MDPD. They may be served in-person or left at an address. Types of non-enforceable writs include criminal and civil subpoenas, summonses and divorce papers, for example. Non-enforceable writs personnel work in one of four squads; two squads work from 6:30 am to 2:30 pm while two work from 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm. In February 2010, approximately 24,000 non-enforceable writs were served while approximately 2,400 were unable to be served and returned to the Clerk of Courts.
- *Enforceable writs* must be served by a sworn law enforcement officer. Enforceable writs must be served in the presence of the customer or the defendant, depending on the writ type. Major types of enforceable writs include:
  - *Evictions* - One squad works from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm
  - *Executions* – seizure of property in lieu of money, pursuant to a final judgment in a civil lawsuit. One squad works from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm
  - *Writs of bodily attachment* – detention of an individual pursuant to an order to appear before a judge - also served by executions squad
  - *Domestic Violence Injunctions* - may entail notification of an upcoming hearing and/or service of a restraining order, which may include removal of an individual from a residence. One squad works from 6:00 am to 2:00 pm while another works from 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm

In February 2010, approximately 1,700 enforceable writs were served by the CSB, while 1,400 were unable to be served and returned to the Clerk of Courts.

Field activities are supported by an administrative team that processes the court papers in preparation for delivery, and again once papers have been delivered in the field. Administrative staff enter writ information into the CSB system, sort and route writs to the appropriate personnel, and respond to customer inquiries. Additionally, administrative staff generate a three-part form that accompanies each writ as it is sent out for delivery.

Flow charts of the major business processes associated with writ delivery can be found in Appendices I and II.

### **Courthouse Security**

The CSB provides security at ten courthouses located throughout the county, including the Richard E. Gerstein Building, which receives approximately 11,000 to 15,000 visitors each week.<sup>1</sup>

### **Cost Recovery**

Individuals who have been sentenced for certain crimes may, at the discretion of the judge, be held responsible for the cost of police activities consumed in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. Currently, those costs are tracked on a case-by-case basis by the respective police district or bureau. The cost recovery unit coordinates the transmittal of this information to the courts as well as the collection of these costs imposed by judges.

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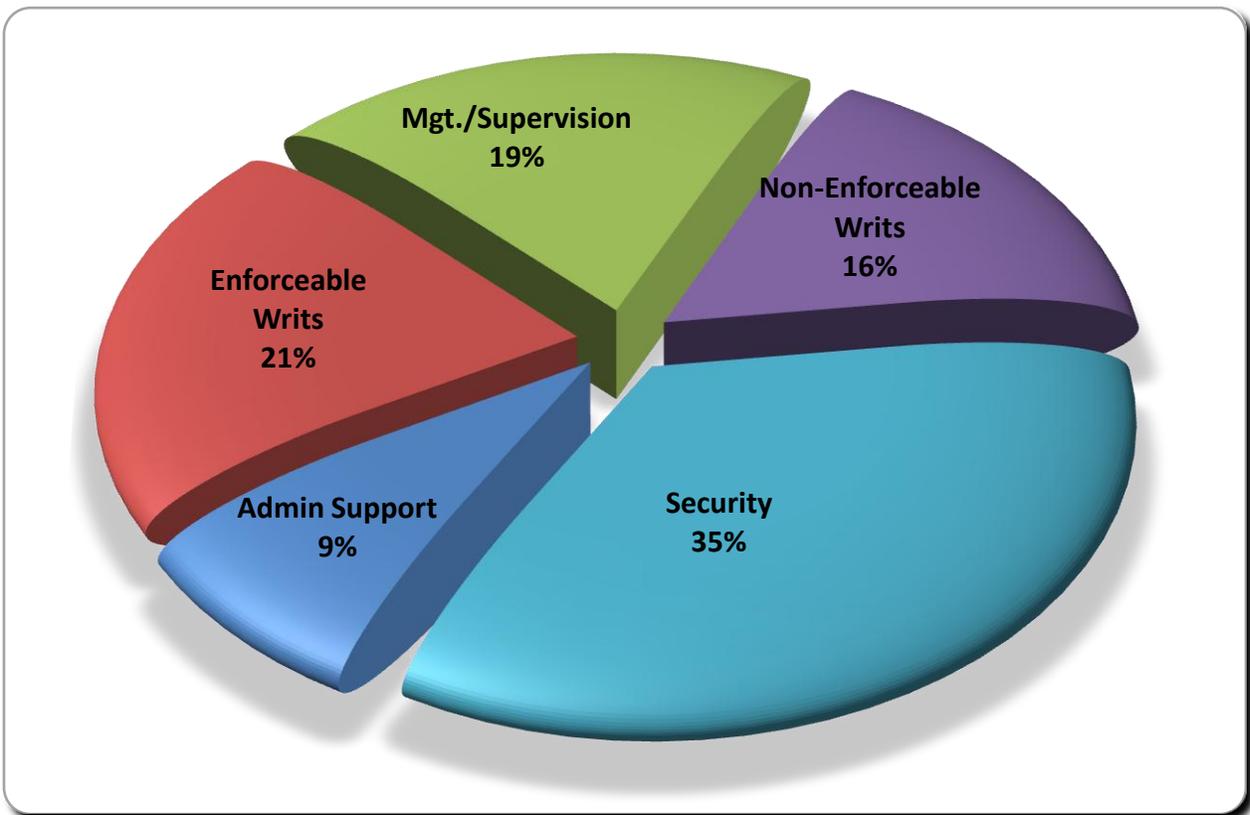
<sup>1</sup> Source: CSB staff

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

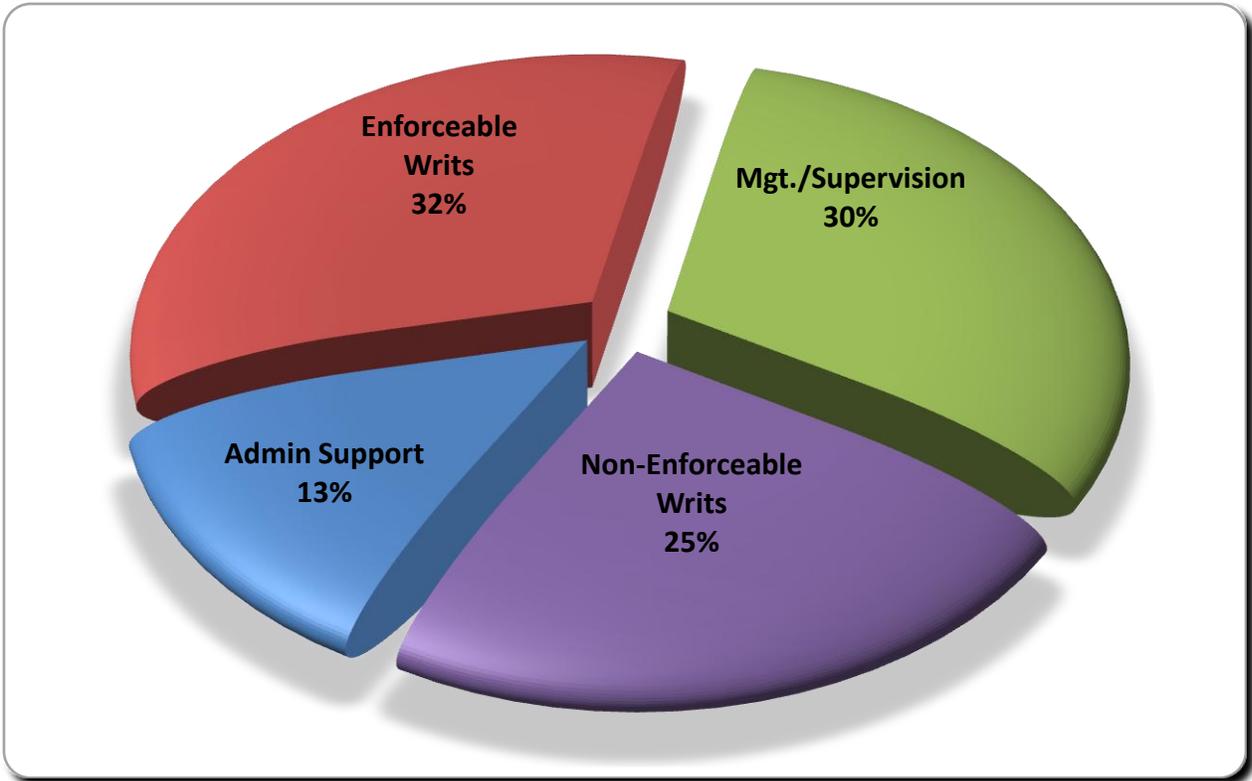
### Activity Analysis

OSBM facilitated a work session with the CSB's staff to identify the cost of each major operational process. Employees were asked to categorize the major tasks that comprise their jobs, and estimate the percentage of time spent on each task. These estimates were then matched with previously defined operational processes and employee-specific compensation data to build an activity-based cost model for the CSB.

Total annual process costs were \$10.4 million. The overall allocation of these costs to the various processes indicates that the CSB is distributing its resources in accordance with its operational priorities. The proportional cost of management and supervision (19 percent) is within acceptable limits for this type of administrative operation. The figure below summarizes these findings.



Since the courthouse security function is a large part of this operation (35 percent of total process costs), and the project's primary focus was on the delivery of writs, the project team also analyzed the distribution of resources while excluding the courthouse security function. These findings are summarized in the following table.



When viewed this way, the proportional cost of management and supervision (30%) appears to be high for this type of operation. This is attributable in part to how the CSB is organized. Under the CSB's current organizational structure, the delivery of each type of enforceable writ (evictions, executions, and domestic violence injunctions) is performed by four distinct squads. The preparation and delivery of non-enforceable writs is performed by four additional squads. A sergeant is assigned to supervise each of these squads. This structure is the reason for the high cost of management and supervision under this scenario. This issue will be addressed in a subsequent section of this report.

## Workload Data

CSB provided information regarding output capacity, customer demand and turnaround times for each type of writ. This information, which was current as of November 2009, is summarized in the table below.

Type Of Writ	Output Capacity	Current Demand	Current Turnaround	Target Turnaround
Executions	3-5 per day	3-5 per day	7.7 days	5 days max.
Evictions	36 per day	50 per day	13.7 days	7 days max.
DVI	57 per day	58 per day	11.25 days	5 days max.
Non-Enforceable Writs	691 per day	816 per day	4.5 days	3 days max.

It should be noted that CSB's current turnarounds are significantly shorter than they were during the summer of 2009. The Bureau achieved these improvements by deploying additional resources to the data entry and field delivery functions. Most of the findings and recommendations presented in the next section of this report focus on operational improvements that would enable CSB to achieve its target turnarounds for the delivery of writs.

## Recommendations: Performance Measurement

### 1. Output targets

The CSB currently tracks and reports a number of workload metrics on the Bureau's scorecard in the County's automated performance management system. These include the number of writs served and not served for various writ types.

In most cases, the performance targets for these measures do not correspond to actual customer demand or output capacity. For example, the CSB's current target for number of non-enforceable writs served is 15,000 per month; however, the actual number of writs served monthly has ranged from 17,000 to 26,000 this fiscal year. Consequently, OSBM recommends updating these targets to more closely reflect customer demand and/or output capacity.

## 2. Additional Measures

In addition to output measures, OSBM recommends tracking and reporting input, efficiency and outcome measures on its scorecard in order to better gauge its overall performance. These include:

### Customer Service:

- Input Measure:
  - Customer call volume
- Outcome Measure:
  - Customer satisfaction

### Office Operations:

- Turnaround time - receipt of writ to placement in delivery queue
- Turnaround time – final disposition of writ to entry in CSB system

### Field Operations:

- Input Measure:
  - Number of writs received by type
- Efficiency Measures:
  - Number of writs served per shift by type
  - Number of writs served per week or month by type
  - Average mileage between stops
  - Average drive time per week or month
- Outcome Measures:
  - Average turnaround time by writ type
  - Percentage of writs successfully served
  - Percentage of writs served prior to court date (where applicable)

### Cost Recovery:

- Input Measures:
  - Number of cost recovery forms received
  - Dollar value of cost recovery forms received
- Efficiency Measures:
  - Percentage of cost recovery forms submitted to court for hearing
- Outcome Measures:
  - Dollars assessed by court
  - Revenue recovered

Most of the following recommendations are aimed at increasing process efficiency, which will improve process outcomes assuming resource levels remain constant. Specific performance measures associated with each recommendation are also identified below.

## **Recommendations: Customer Service**

### *1. Increase public awareness of service level capacity*

Currently, customers are not given clear information regarding the expected turnaround time for delivery of writs. This may lead to an increase in the volume of calls or visits to the downtown office as customers seek information regarding the status of writs.

It is recommended that the CSB define the expected service time by writ type and communicate it to their customers through all communication channels (e.g. forms, website, etc.). Ideally, the CSB should work with the Clerk of Courts (COC) to ensure that this information is conveyed to customers at the time the writ is filed.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduces phone/office inquiries and complaints

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Customer call volume

### *2. Improve quality and promotion of information provided to customers via forms and the web*

Public information presented in the CSB's various flyers and forms and on its website is not written in clear, easily understandable language, nor presented in one consistent format. In many cases, legal jargon is used. Also, some of the Bureau's forms lack contact information and the CSB website address. Finally, although a link to the CSB website is currently located on the MDPD home page, the name "Court Services Bureau" may not be recognizable to all customers.

OSBM recommends redesigning the web page to provide information in simple, easy-to-understand language. Potentially, the CSB could present the same basic information in two formats: one designed for attorneys and one designed for the general public. Contact information and the website URL should be provided on all CSB documents; additionally, this information should be conveyed in the message of the automatic phone answering system. OSBM also recommends improving the accessibility of the CSB website by placing a hyperlink to the site on the COC web page, and by changing the name of the hyperlink on MDPD's website to something more recognizable (e.g.: "Writs" instead of "Court Services Bureau").

OSBM recommends that the CSB work with communications experts in the MDPD Public Information Office (PIO) and/or the Government Information Center (GIC) in implementing this recommendation.

Key Benefit(s):

- Improves information to the public

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Customer call volume
- Customer satisfaction

*3. Promotion of writ search function of the CSB website*

The CSB receives a large number of telephone inquiries regarding the status of writs, which must be handled in person by administrative staff. The CSB website does have a writ search function that gives real time information about the status of a writ ([www.miamidade.gov/mdpd/cs\\_writs.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/mdpd/cs_writs.asp)). However, the link is not sufficiently highlighted on the CSB home page, nor is it promoted on CSB forms or by the Clerk. Consequently, it is recommended that the CSB website more prominently feature the link to this search function, as well as on the COC's and MDPD's sites and on all CSB materials.

Additionally, to decrease the number of live phone calls, an automated writ search option could be added to the menu of the telephone service. This would entail simply selecting the search option and entering the writ number when prompted. To implement this recommendation, the CSB should work with the Telephone Customer Service Office of the Enterprise Technology Services Department (ETSD).

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduces the volume of phone call inquiries
- Improves information to the public

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Customer call volume
- Customer satisfaction

*4. Improve distribution of work of the office clerks (direct customer service v/s data entry)*

Office clerks have a dual function: in addition to entering the writ data in the CSB system, they are expected to handle customer concerns. Many customer inquiries take from ten to 20 minutes, and the overall volume is substantial. Office clerks have stated that the frequent interruptions significantly impede data entry efficiency. To improve this process, the CSB office has developed a rotating schedule for answering phone calls; somewhat reducing interruptions to data entry.

OSBM's recommendation is to fully separate the handling of phone calls from the data entry function. Implementation would require developing a staff deployment plan with specific assignments for data entry and customer service functions. It would also be necessary to identify additional work functions that could be performed by phone intake staff during down time.

Key Benefit(s):

- Improves data entry efficiency

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Data Entry of Writs entered over goal amount
- Data Entry Writs returned over the goal amount

**Recommendations: Office Operations**

*1. Work with Clerk of Courts to improve initial proofreading of writs*

Occasionally, writ information received by the CSB is erroneous or illegible. OSBM recommends that the CSB work with the COC to ensure proofreading by their clerks on the front end in order to reduce errors downstream.

Key Benefit(s):

- Increases efficiency of data entry
- Increases efficiency of field personnel

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Percentage of writs successfully served

*2. Eliminate manual data entry*

In order to deliver a writ, a CSB field officer needs the name and address of the defendant as well as the legal paperwork to be served. When a case is created in the COC system, the case number and name of plaintiff and defendant are entered into the system. This information is later electronically transmitted to the CSB system. At the same time, the legal paperwork is delivered to CSB. Once this is received, CSB data entry clerks add the contact information of both parties for each case into the CSB system. Subsequently, information for each case is printed on a three-part form, consisting of three carbon copies printed on a dot matrix printer, and attached to its corresponding legal papers. Lastly, the package is handed to the field officers for service. On the back end, when a writ is delivered or returned to the office without service, disposition

information is entered into the CSB system and transmitted, via the paper three-part form, to the COC.

The initial data entry function is a time intensive process and delays field service. OSBM suggests that the CSB negotiate with the COC to transfer responsibility for data entry of contact information.<sup>2</sup> This information could be entered into CIVA and subsequently downloaded into the CSB system. COC staff, who deal directly with the customers, are in a better position to catch errors, illegible handwriting, and other problems before the writ is filed (see recommendation #1 above). In return, OSBM recommends that the CSB review the feasibility of automating the transfer of disposition information back into CIVA, to reduce the data entry burden at the COC (see recommendations #3 and #4 below).

A feasibility study is currently underway by MDPD IT staff.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduces time and personnel needed for data entry
- Reduces processing time

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Turnaround time - receipt of writ to placement in delivery queue

### *3. Redesign the three-part form*

As previously noted, all key writ information is documented by the CSB using the three-part form. Following delivery, the first sheet is returned to the COC, the second sheet is returned to the plaintiff, and the third sheet, which includes field personnel's notes, is retained by the CSB for reference.

The form is printed on carbon copy paper on a high impact dot-matrix printer. Only one such printer is currently available, and due to its age and outdated technology, its printing speed is very slow. This limited printing capability produces large bottlenecks when work volume is high. Moreover, replacement parts are costly; and the printer tends to break down approximately three times per year, two to four days each time.

OSBM recommends redesigning the form in two phases to eliminate the need for the carbon copy format. Phase one entails redesigning the layout of the form to include space for basic writ information and comments on a single, uniform sheet that can be printed and, following delivery, copied on modern equipment. Possibly, pre-perforated paper could be used if the "notes" portion of the form is not needed for the COC or plaintiffs; this portion of the form could then be torn off prior to transmittal. The CSB could then replace the existing printing equipment with a laser printer.

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<sup>2</sup> Data entry would still be necessary for writs filed outside of Miami-Dade County.

Phase two entails transitioning to a near-paperless system. If field staff are able to receive and transmit writ information via wireless technology (see recommendation #4 below), and if disposition information is transmitted electronically to the Clerk (see recommendation #2), then printing would only be required to transmit disposition information to the customer.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduces paper and printing cost
- Eliminates processing delays caused by malfunctioning equipment

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Printing cost
- Turnaround time - receipt of writ to placement in delivery queue

*4. Explore the feasibility of providing laptops or hand-held devices to field personnel*

When a writ is delivered or returned to the office without service, disposition information is entered into the CSB system and transmitted, via the paper three-part form, to the COC. Due to the delivery and data entry turnaround time, there is a window of time during which writ status is unknown. If a customer requests status information in this time period, the CSB cannot provide an accurate answer.

By providing field personnel with PCs and/or handheld devices linked to the CSB system, the CSB could enable real time writ status updates from the field and greatly reduce paperwork and data entry by field and office staff alike. Potentially, this information could be transferred into CIVA in real time (see recommendation #2 above). Additionally, manual log books could be similarly automated.

The MDPD IT Bureau is presently analyzing the feasibility and costs of implementing this recommendation. OSBM strongly recommends that the CSB explore grant opportunities to fund this initiative.

Key Benefit(s):

- Eliminates office data entry of disposition information; reduces field personnel paperwork
- Provides real time information to customers

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Customer satisfaction
- Turnaround time – final disposition of writ to entry in CSB system

5. *Automate production of statistical and management reports*

Currently, CSB management does not have access to automated statistical reports. The production of these reports entails manual counts of the writs in the holding bins by supervisors. However, the CSB system does include information regarding all the writs that have been entered, delivered, and closed. ETSD has provided a list of the types of reports that this system generates. Presently, these reports do not fulfill the department's requirements for tracking. Consequently, OSBM recommends that the CSB continue to work with ETSD and/or the MDPD IT Bureau to develop or adjust these reports to satisfy CSB's requirements.

Key Benefit(s):

- Eliminates unnecessary work for supervisors
- Improves timeliness and accuracy of management information

6. *Produce automated reports that prioritize writs by court date and other relevant criteria*

Writs must be prioritized in accordance with mandatory court dates and other relevant criteria (e.g. domestic violence injunctions for which safety is an issue). Currently, this prioritization takes place manually.

OSBM recommends that the CSB work with the MDPD IT Bureau and/or ETSD to develop an automated report in the CSB system that identifies the time sensitive writs in priority order.

Key Benefit(s):

- Increases success rate
- Reduces officer time on filing/sorting writs

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Percentage of writs served prior to court date (where applicable)

**Recommendations: Field Activities**

1. *Automated routing*

Currently, routing of field visits is largely performed manually. Unenforceable writs are assigned to geographic zones according to the zip code of the delivery address. The process server who is responsible for deliveries in that zone then determines the sequence of deliveries using his own judgment. Enforceable writs are typically grouped into large geographic areas (e.g. north and south Dade). Within these large areas officers either a) determine the sequence of daily activities using their judgment, as in

the case of Domestic Violence injunctions or b) serve writs in accordance with pre-set appointment times, as in the case of Evictions and Executions.

The Enterprise Technology Services Department (ETSD) currently holds an enterprise-wide license for ArcLogistics, an automated desktop routing software. The software is designed to import call data, geocode service requests and optimize routes for maximum efficiency. Additionally, the software can generate reports summarizing the cost of each route. OSBM believes that ArcLogistics could significantly improve routing efficiency in the unenforceable writs section, where it could replace entirely the current zone system. Consequently, it is recommended that MDPD work with ETSD to determine the feasibility and cost of implementation; the primary issue to be considered is the transfer of writ information from the CSB system into ArcLogistics.

Implementation for the enforceable writs section should eventually be considered. However, officers in this section specialize in one particular type of call and have smaller workloads; therefore, the opportunities for efficiencies are less significant. The Evictions and Executions teams also work by appointment, which substantially diminishes routing flexibility.

Key Benefit(s):

- Improves efficiency: more writs served with same resource level

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per shift by type
- Average mileage between stops
- Average drive time per week

*2. Improve zone system for unenforceable writs (alternative to #1 above)*

As noted above, implementation of automated routing software would eliminate the current zone system used by the unenforceable writs section. As an interim step, or in lieu of automated routing if it is not feasible, OSBM recommends updating the configuration of the geographic zones. The zones were initially designed several years ago and have not been updated to reflect changing conditions like shifts in population, land use, traffic patterns or CSB workload. An update would improve the balance of workloads among process servers in the different zones.

Key Benefit(s):

- Improves efficiency: more writs served with same resource level

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per shift by type
- Average mileage between stops / drive time

### 3. 4 x 10 work schedules

CSB staff currently work five day, eight hour (5 x 8) work weeks. CSB staff estimate that employees may spend in the range of one hour per day on start of day and end of day activities in the office. Employees working 4 x 10 schedules save approximately this same amount of time each week by working one fewer day; this is equivalent to 2.5 percent of available work hours. Additionally, employees on 4 x10 schedules should spend less time driving in a given week between the office and their designated work areas. Potentially, this could save up to five percent of available hours if field staff is reporting to remote locations such as Homestead.

Consequently, OSBM recommends that the CSB implement a 4x10 work schedule on a pilot basis and monitor the impact on productivity. As with any alternate work week implementation, the CSB should analyze coverage requirements and any other business issues including supervision, equipment, fleet, dispatch, IT support, etc. The necessity to serve writs timely must also be taken into account, particularly in the case of Domestic Violence Injunctions. Additionally, the CSB should review and address any collective bargaining issues, obtain employee feedback and address any personal issues (such as child care) prior to implementation.

Key Benefit(s):

- Increased time in the field leading to improved efficiency: more writs served with same resource level

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per week by type

### 4. Afternoon shift

The morning shift is currently from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CSB staff noted in work sessions that in many cases, individuals being served at their residences are not home during these hours because they are working. Additionally, staff noted that driving through school zones affects their productivity during these hours. Therefore, OSBM recommends that the CSB consider shifting additional resources to the afternoon shift. This would entail identifying appropriate work units, conducting an analysis of service success rate based on time of day, by writ type, and identifying required resources, including vehicles. Based on findings, the CSB should proceed with schedule adjustments on a pilot basis and evaluate the resulting impact on productivity.

(\*Note: ArcLogistics, the automated routing system discussed in Recommendation #1, does consider school zones in the configuration of routes.)

Key Benefit(s):

- Greater # of writs served / executed per shift

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per shift by type

*5. Start and/or end the day in the field*

Currently, all field staff begin and end the workday at the CSB office at 140 West Flagler Street. Officers report to this central location in order to pick up and drop off writs and vehicles, as well as to perform administrative tasks and attend meetings. By starting and/or ending the day in the field, staff could minimize the time to drive between downtown and their work locations, thus freeing up more time to deliver writs.

OSBM, while cognizant that the physical security of writs is important, recommends that the CSB further explore a range of options:

- a. The CSB could use satellite locations as pick-up / drop-off points for writs so that field staff does not need to come downtown. These locations should be conveniently located and capable of accommodating the secure storage of writs; potentially, district police stations, municipal police stations or courthouses could be used for this purpose. This alternative would require a courier to deliver writs to the remote locations.
- b. Alternately, the CSB could arrange for morning and afternoon shift personnel to meet in the field for a “hand-off” of paperwork. Under this scenario, morning shift staff would leave from downtown and end the day in the field, while afternoon shift staff would start in the field and end the day downtown. Transportation of writs would not be an issue; however, in the case of enforceable writs, this option would require a secure location in which one officer could leave his vehicle for the day.
- c. A third option is for the CSB to utilize Court Support Specialists as document couriers.

Key Benefit(s):

- Increased time in the field leading to improved efficiency: more writs served with same resource level

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per week by type

## 6. *Minimize roll calls*

Some CSB staff noted that roll calls are held more frequently than may be necessary, reducing available time in the field. OSBM recommends that the CSB minimize roll calls to the extent feasible.

Key Benefit(s):

- Increased time in the field leading to improved efficiency: more writs served with same resource level

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per week by type

## 7. *Incorrect addresses*

CSB enforcement staff stated that in some instances, the Clerk of Courts sends the CSB writs that were previously not served due to an erroneous delivery address, and that the CSB is then obligated to revisit the same incorrect location. Two situations might result in such a scenario. The address might be nonexistent, or the occupants of the address might inform the CSB that the person named in the writ does not reside / work there.

In the case where the address does not exist - assuming that the CSB has physically visited the location to verify its nonexistence - OSBM recommends that the CSB seek guidance from the County Attorney as to whether a physical visit is required for the re-filed writ.

If the address exists, but the CSB has been told that the person named in the writ does not reside / work in that location, the writ may have been re-filed by the plaintiff for one of two reasons. First, the plaintiff may have misunderstood the reason for non-service. To address this possibility, OSBM recommends that in its redesign of the three part form, the CSB ensure that the reasons for non-service are clearly visible to the plaintiff. Additionally, OSBM recommends that the CSB work with the Clerk of Courts to determine whether the Clerk could remind the plaintiff of the reasons the previous writ could not be served at the time the writ is re-filed.

The second possibility is that, notwithstanding the information provided by the CSB, the plaintiff continues to believe that the person named in the writ can, in fact, be found at that location. In this event, the CSB is obligated to revisit the location.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Assuming, of course, that all fees have been paid.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduced workload and backlog (counter-balanced, however, by reduced revenue)

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Turnaround time per writ

*8. Consider eliminating specialization of enforceable writ types*

As previously noted, officers in the enforceable writs section currently specialize in one of three different writ types: evictions, executions and domestic violence injunctions (DVIIs). Due to the relatively small workloads and resource levels<sup>4</sup> in enforceable writs, officers are typically assigned to very large geographic areas, as opposed to smaller zone assignments for unenforceable writs. This can result in lengthy drive times between stops, reducing available work time and increasing fuel and fleet costs. Moreover, officers specialized in different writ types may in fact visit the same geographic area on the same day.

OSBM recommends that the CSB consider eliminating the practice of specialization and allow officers to serve any of the three writ types. This would give the CSB greater flexibility in allocating resources as workloads fluctuate, and would enable the officers to be assigned to smaller geographic areas on any given day, thus reducing drive time and increasing available productive time. Additionally, this change would enable the CSB to achieve efficiencies in the management and supervision of the various squads.

CSB management has stated that each writ type requires specialized legal knowledge that may be difficult to obtain; however, officers do currently rotate assignments occasionally should workloads and/or vacation schedules dictate. Implementation of such an approach would require development of a strategy to ensure that should an eviction or an execution entail an arrest, the use of force or some other situation that impacts the ability of the officers to continue with other scheduled daily activities, then time-sensitive writs such as DVIIs would still be served.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduced drive time leading to improved efficiency: more writs served with same resource level
- Reduced fuel and fleet costs
- Reduced management and supervision costs

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Number of writs served per week by type

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<sup>4</sup> When compared to unenforceable writs

### *9. Consider strategies for delegating a portion of the DVI workload to municipalities*

Under state law, municipalities have the authority to serve domestic violence injunctions within their borders. OSBM recommends that MDPD explore strategies for delegating a portion of its DVI workload to municipal police departments in order to reduce workloads.

### *10. Employee Incentives*

After MDPD implements the approved recommendations and eliminates the current backlogs in the delivery of writs, the CSB should update and/or establish reasonable performance standards for several of the Bureau's major activities. These standards should be driven by a strong commitment to excellent customer service, and a specific requirement to deliver writs within the target turnaround times stated earlier in this report. With these standards in place, the Bureau will be well positioned to explore the feasibility of implementing new employee incentives to further improve productivity, and accurately measure the impact(s) of those incentives.

OSBM recommends that the CSB explore the feasibility of the following employee incentives:

- An employee recognition program that rewards efficiency for administrative employees as well as field staff. The thresholds that define outstanding efficiency should be based on the performance standards established after the approved recommendations are implemented and the current backlogs eliminated.
- An incentive program that would allow field staff and/or office employees to go home when they have completed their work for the day. CSB staff expressed a belief that field productivity (delivery of writs) would increase significantly with this recommendation. To implement this incentive program responsibly, the CSB must meet the following requirements:
  - The Bureau must implement all approved recommendations, document the impact(s) of each recommendation, eliminate all current backlogs in the delivery of writs, and clearly determine how much work should be assigned to each employee so that the completion of the assigned workload would significantly exceed the daily output requirement.
  - The Bureau must ensure that target turnarounds continue to be achieved.
  - The Bureau must aggressively audit the work to ensure that service quality is either maintained or improved under this incentive program.

- Particularly in the case of field staff, the Bureau must frequently and aggressively audit performance to ensure that both employee and public safety are not compromised under this incentive program.

A general employee recognition program may not require rigorous trial testing prior to implementation. However, the second suggested alternative would require such testing; this should be designed to determine the extent to which the program achieves the desired results and meets all performance requirements. OSBM recommends that any initial trial tests be conducted over a three month period, and that the programs' results be reviewed annually thereafter.

If either program fails to meet its goals, or otherwise falls short of its performance requirements, it should be discontinued immediately.

### **Recommendations: Cost Recovery**

#### *1. Flat fee*

As previously noted, persons who have been sentenced for certain crimes may, at the discretion of the judge, be held responsible for the cost of police activities consumed in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. Currently, those costs are tracked on a case-by-case basis by the respective police district or bureau.

OSBM recommends that MDPD explore the feasibility of imposing flat fees for each type of offense. Implementation of such a fee schedule would eliminate the need for detailed accounting and for providing itemized costs to the courts prior to sentencing. To the extent that MDPD does not currently capture all officer costs for all eligible cases, implementation of a flat fee could potentially increase revenue to the County. To assess this idea's feasibility, MDPD should consult with the County Attorney and with municipal police departments, whose participation would also be required.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduced paperwork
- Reduced cost of collection
- (Potentially) increased revenue

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Court Cost Recovery net revenues

#### *2. Automate OMNI form and update Cost Recovery System*

Currently, police districts and bureaus track their reimbursable costs manually on a form referred to as the "OMNI." These forms are sent to the CSB, where staff enters the data into a database developed in-house. This information is stored on a hard drive; the

system consists of a program on a floppy disk. As such, the system is antiquated and vulnerable to malfunctions and data loss.

In the event that a flat fee is not feasible, OSBM recommends that the CSB work with the MDPD IT Bureau to automate the OMNI form, to include interfaces to court systems including the mainframe Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) and Traffic, and to the *e-notify* system, which tracks officers' court appearances. The MDPD IT Bureau completed a functional analysis that delineated the steps necessary to create such an interfaced system that would also automate the production of certain reports and other outputs. This analysis did not identify costs, however.

It should be noted that implementation of flat fees as discussed above would enable a much simpler Cost Recovery System, as the System would primarily be used for collection efforts once fees have been imposed.

Key Benefit(s):

- Reduced paperwork
- Reduced cost of collection
- (Potentially) increased revenue
- Greater data security and improved functionality

Key Indicator(s) of Performance Impacts:

- Court Cost Recovery net revenues

*3. Evaluate the costs / benefits of the Cost Recovery Unit*

According to data provided by MDPD, total annualized revenue attributed to court cost recovery was approximately \$315,000. A total of three Full Time Equivalent positions are currently dedicated to this function, not including the resources that are currently devoted to tracking officer costs at the district / bureau level. Given the very low return on investment, OSBM recommends that MDPD reconsider whether the cost recovery function, as currently structured, should continue.

**Recommendations: Organizational Structure**

*1. Evaluate the organizational placement of the Cost Recovery Unit*

Cost recovery is not part of the core mission of the Court Services Bureau. Consequently, OSBM recommends that the CSB consider reassigning the function to an alternate bureau such as Fiscal Administration.

*2. Consider partnering with GSA to administer auctions*

The Enforceable Writs Section currently administers the auction of goods that have been seized by court order pursuant to a civil judgment, in accordance with the Florida Statutes. Administration of auctions is not a core business function of MDPD; in

contrast, the County's General Services Administration (GSA) regularly conducts auctions of surplus property, including vehicles. OSBM recommends that the CSB consider partnering with GSA to administer sheriff's sales. The CSB should retain responsibility for oversight of the auction process in accordance with state statute, and guidance should be sought from the County Attorney to ensure the legality of this recommendation.

### *3. Transfer Financial Systems Unit to Administration*

Currently, the Financial Systems Unit reports to the Enforceable Writs Section, under a Lieutenant whose primary area of expertise is police work. In most organizations, financial work units are subsets of a general administrative work unit that serves the entire organization. Since the CSB did not offer a compelling reason for the current structure, OSBM recommends transferring the Financial Systems group to the Administrative Section within CSB.

### *4. Consolidate Supervisory Responsibilities*

As stated previously in this report, the relatively high cost of management and supervision in the CSB is primarily attributable to the large number of squads that deliver various types of writs. Once the proposed automation improvements are implemented (including ArcLogistics), the traditional zone designations for unenforceable writs will be eliminated, and much of the effort currently devoted to work scheduling and the production of the various manual reports will no longer be necessary. Consequently, OSBM believes that the CSB will be in a position to broaden the span of control for field supervisors, reduce the number of squads, and re-assign former squad supervisors to field activity within the Bureau if there is sufficient work demand, or elsewhere within MDPD.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CONCLUSION**

OSBM would like to thank the management team and staff at the CSB, the Central Records Bureau, the Chief Financial Officer and his team, the Information Technology Group at MDPD, and the professional staff from the Clerk of Courts for their active participation throughout this study. Their commitment to service improvement and willingness to think creatively formed the foundation for many of the recommendations in this report. We thank them for their valuable input.

If required, MDPD should request OSBM's assistance with implementation of the recommendations.



Appendix II - Enforceable Writs – Domestic Violence Injunctions Process Map  
 Court Services

