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Executive Director

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State of Florida

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A Word From JAC's Executive Director



Rip Colvin
JAC Executive Director

The most recent Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) meeting was held telephonically on December 8, 2014. The agenda focused on the Auditor General's Preliminary and Tentative Findings, but also included proposed changes to JAC's Salary Schedule, and an update by JAC's General Counsel, Cris Martinez, on JAC's referrals to the Office of Fiscal Integrity (OFI), Florida Department of Financial Services regarding significant invoice irregularities on the part of an investigative firm in the 13th Circuit and a court reporter in the 18th Circuit. Ms. Martinez advised the Commissioners that OFI has reviewed all of the information provided by JAC for both cases. They have either issued, or will soon issue, subpoenas to further the investigation and plan on conducting interviews as appropriate.

JAC Commissioners approved JAC's written response to the Auditor General's Preliminary and Tentative Findings, JAC's Salary Schedule Revisions, and authorized Administrative Leave for all JAC staff on December 26, 2014.

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment for pre-tax benefits began October 20th, at 8 a.m., and ended promptly November 7th, at 6 p.m. (all times Eastern). Open Enrollment

packets were mailed mid-October to all employees eligible to participate in the State Group Insurance Program. There was no limit to the number of changes an employee could make during Open Enrollment. However, remember, changes may only be made during the plan year if there is an appropriate qualifying event. Payroll deductions will begin in December for coverage effective January 1, 2015.

Open Enrollment for the Florida Prepaid College plans began October 15, 2014 and ends February 28, 2015. So, you still have time to enroll your child or grandchild in the plan of your choice.

Happy holidays to you and your family and best wishes throughout the New Year!

JAC's Holiday Christmas Tree was decorated courtesy of JAC's Shellie Shelton.



*Happy Holidays
and New Year from
JAC!*

2015 Florida Legislative Bills of Interest

Senate Bill 150

Senate Bill 150, sponsored by Senator Jeremy Ring, creates s. 43.45, F.S., which requires the Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) and the Office of the Attorney General to develop and launch a student loan assistance program on behalf of career Assistant State Attorneys, Assistant Public Defenders, Assistant Attorney Generals, or Assistant Statewide Prosecutors in their repayment of specified student loans. The bill establishes administrative requirements of the program, stipulating that the administering party will be responsible for making payments to eligible attorneys based on their length of service and the availability of funds. Provision is also made for funding in this bill, while requiring JAC and the Office of the Attorney General to develop the actual procedures that will be used to administer the program. An effective date of July 1, 2015 is provided.

Section 1. This section creates s. 43.45, F.S., regarding a Student Loan Assistance Program and clarifies the manner in which the Program will be administered. In s. 43.45(1)(a), F.S., “Administering body” is defined to mean:

The Justice Administrative Commission if the eligible career attorney is an Assistant State Attorney or Assistant Public Defender.

The Office of the Attorney General if the eligible career attorney is an Assistant Attorney General or Assistant Statewide Prosecutor.

Section 1 also provides additional definitions and clarifications. “Eligible attorney” means an Assistant State Attorney, Assistant Public Defender, Assistant Attorney General, or Assistant Statewide Prosecutor; and “eligible career attorney” means an eligible attorney who has completed at least three years [*three years and one day*], but not more than 12 years, of continuous service as an eligible attorney. “Eligible student loan” is also defined with language that expressly prohibits loans that are in default. Loans must be issued pursuant to the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended, to help fund law school education. The definition for “Employment Anniversary” is clarified to mean the date that an eligible career attorney begins employment within the context of this bill. The JAC, as one of the administering bodies, is required to implement a student loan assistance program for eligible career Assistant State Attorneys and Assistant Public Defenders. The manner in which the JAC shall administer the program is further detailed, indicating that the eligible career Assistant State Attorney or Assistant Public Defender must submit, to his or her employer, a certification affidavit within 30 days following the applicable employment anniversary. After execution of the certification affidavit by the employer, the employer shall submit the affidavit to JAC within 60 days after the most recent employment anniversary date of the eligible career Assistant State Attorney or Assistant Public Defender. Upon receipt of a certification affidavit from the Office of the State Attorney or Public Defender, the JAC shall make the following maximum payments:

Three thousand dollars if the eligible career Assistant State Attorney or Assistant Public Defender has at least three years, but not more than six years, of continuous service; or

Five thousand dollars if the eligible career Assistant State Attorney or Assistant Public Defender has more than six years, but not more than 12 years, of continuous service.

Payments must cease upon totaling \$44,000 per eligible attorney or upon full satisfaction of the eligible student loan—whichever comes first. If implemented, this section also permits this student loan assistance program to be funded annually based upon an appropriation in the General Appropriations Act. A similar measure, House Bill 45, has been filed by Representative Dave Kerner.

Source: The Florida Senate



*Senate Bill 150
addresses law
school student
loan relief in
Florida.*

*Source:
Florida Senate
and Florida
House*

2015 Florida Legislative Bills of Interest

House Bill 4003

House Bill 4003, sponsored by Representative Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda, was filed on November 21, 2014 and was referred to the Criminal Justice and Justice Appropriations Subcommittees, and the Judiciary Committee on December 19, 2014.

Amending ss. 775.082, 27.51, and 27.511, F.S., the bill deletes various provisions regarding the death penalty for capital felonies, as well as provisions concerning “the effect” of a declaration by a court of last resort that the death penalty in a capital felony is unconstitutional. Additionally, the bill deletes provisions regarding capital collateral representation and, among other things, prohibits a death sentence on behalf of a mentally retarded defendant. Specifically, ss. 27.7001, 27.7002, 27.701, 27.702, 27.703, 27.704, 27.7045, 27.705, 27.706, 27.707, 27.708, 27.7081, 27.7091, 27.710, 27.711, and 27.715, F.S., are all repealed by this bill. The measure also addresses proceedings when an individual under a death sentence appears to be insane or pregnant and amends s. 119.071, F.S., by deleting a public records exemption for capital collateral proceedings. The effective date for this bill is July 1, 2015.

Use JAC’s [website](#) as a resource to help track important developments on key bills during the 2015 Legislative Session.

As a courtesy to JAC staff and the agencies administratively served by JAC, we will be actively monitoring the filing and progression of legislative bills that may be of interest to you. If you become aware of a bill that you would like to have added to our tracking list, please let us know. Please feel free to contact Lydia.Mount@justiceadmin.org throughout the 2015 Legislative Session.



Additional bills we are tracking are featured on JAC’s website under “What’s New” — Legislative Updates and News. You may click [here](#) to access this list.

FLAIR Facts & Fiction — By Vicki Nichols, CPM

FLAIR Standardization of Object Codes Project

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) is requiring all state agencies to participate in an “Object Codes Standardization Project.” DFS has determined that “rolling-up” object codes in FLAIR (state accounting system) into more general classifications and standardizing object codes across all agencies is necessary for state accounting. The object code is a key data element in FLAIR data entry and FLAIR reporting.

JAC formed an Object Codes Workgroup with staff in offices administratively served to review and analyze the impact of the new standard codes versus the “old” codes. The following offices had one, or more, representatives participating in the workgroup: PD1, PD2, PD11, PD13, SA5, SA6, SA10, SA11, SA14, SA16, SA20, RC1, CCRC-M, and JAC. There were approximately 400 object codes for the Workgroup to review and analyze. The Workgroup completed their review in mid-December. JAC staff would like to thank those participating in the Object Codes Workgroup for their assistance in this endeavor.

The transition to the new standardized codes will *likely take place during the month of May 2015*. JAC will be distributing the object codes crosswalk to all offices in early January and will plan GoToMeeting sessions to assist with the transition. JAC staff will also be working with the BOMS user groups to assist with the changeover in BOMS. Any questions regarding the object codes transition may be directed to Vicki Nichols: vicki.nichols@justiceadmin.org.

“The transition to the new standardized codes will likely take place during the month of May 2015.”



New Federal Grant Reforms — By Lydia Mount, MPA, CPM

Reminder: OMB Deploys New Federal Grant Reforms on December 26, 2014

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will launch new Federal grant reforms on December 26, 2014, for state and local governments, colleges, universities, and nonprofits. The new rule, commonly referred to as the “*Super or Omni*” Circular, streamlines eight Federal regulations (including OMB Circulars A-110, A-122, and A-133) into a single, comprehensive policy guide. OMB reports that, “These changes will afford the Federal government the ability to better administer the \$600 billion awarded annually for grants, cooperative agreements, and other types of financial assistance.” To view the Omni Circular, click [here](#).

Any entity that awards or receives Federal funds will be affected by the sweeping reforms within the *Omni Circular*. The reforms are designed to:

1. Eliminate duplication and conflicting guidance
2. Focus on performance over compliance for accountability
3. Encourage efficient use of information technology and shared services
4. Provide for consistent and transparent treatment of costs
5. Limit allowable costs to make the best use of Federal resources
6. Set standard business processes using data definitions
7. Encourage non-federal entities to have family-friendly policies
8. Strengthen oversight, and
9. Target audit requirements on risk of waste, fraud, and abuse

According to OMB, “These policy [reforms] could improve oversight of Federal awards by increasing transparency through the publication of audit reports, requiring recipients to have strong internal controls, and requiring Federal agencies to review risks prior to making an award.” The Single Audit threshold will be raised from \$500,000 in Federal awards per year to \$750,000. OMB advises that this change will reduce the audit burden for approximately 5,000 non-Federal entities, while sustaining Single Audit coverage for over 99 percent of the Federal dollars currently covered. As an internal control measure, non-Federal entities will be required to take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information, as well as any information that the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity designates as sensitive.

All public and local agencies that are interested in, or have historically received, Federal awards should take the time to become familiar with these new guidelines.

Reprinted from September/October 2014 JAC Informer



*The “Super or
Omni”
Circular,
streamlines
eight Federal
regulations.*



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BOARDING THE EDMS TRAIN

The Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) continues the phased implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). This is an update.

As requested by the circuits, we have finished the development for Revenue Accounting to allow the circuits to submit deposits electronically. It will work similarly to Circuit Accounting's process, where the transmittal form and supporting documentation are e-mailed by the circuit and then processed by Revenue Accounting. The section will spend the first month testing the process with designated circuits. Then, if no changes are made, the section will "go-live" with all circuits.

Courtesy of Michelle Dolce



The EDMS Mission

"Excellent service delivery enhanced by an efficient Electronic Document Management System, which meets the requirements of Florida law."

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.JUSTICEADMIN.ORG

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

~Benjamin Franklin~

For comments, suggestions, and/or submissions for the next bi-monthly newsletter, please contact:

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JAC in Brief

The Justice Administrative Commission administratively serves 20 Offices of State Attorney, 20 Offices of Public Defender, 3 Offices of Capital Collateral Regional Counsel, 5 Offices of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, and the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program; and, provides compliance and financial review of court-appointed attorney fees and due process costs.

The membership of the Justice Administrative Commission consists of two State Attorneys, appointed by the President of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association and two Public Defenders, appointed by the President of the Florida Public Defender Association. Although members may be reappointed, each term spans a period of two years (s. 43.16, F.S.).

Vision: *To be a model of exemplary state government and provide unparalleled services.*

Mission: *To be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, while providing the highest quality service to the 49 judicial related entities, private court appointed counsel, and associated vendors we serve, by ensuring compliance with laws, rules, regulations, and best business practices.*

Values: *We take great pride in excellence in service, innovation, adaptability, collaboration, honesty, integrity, accountability, and diversity, as well as respectful and ethical conduct, and fiscal responsibility.*