



# AUDITOR GENERAL

William O. Monroe, CPA



## HURRICANE SHELTERS AND GRANT MANAGEMENT FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS OPERATIONAL AUDIT

### SUMMARY

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (Department) and other State and local governments are assigned by law the task of eliminating the deficit of safe public hurricane evacuation shelter space in the State. The Department also administers numerous programs that award contracts and grants to various entities.

Our audit focused on the progress made in eliminating the deficit of hurricane shelter space and the Department's overall administration of the shelter-related programs. Our audit also focused on the Department's efforts related to grant management.

As summarized below, we noted several deficiencies that should be addressed by Department management and the Legislature in regard to the administration of programs governing both hurricane evacuation shelters and the overall grant management system:

- ◆ Although the Department's recent efforts to address the deficit in available hurricane evacuation shelters have resulted in an increase in available shelter spaces, the retrofitting (upgrading) of facilities in geographic regions with shelter space deficiencies may not be completed within the timeframes established in the law.
- ◆ Because current law does not provide enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with public shelter design criteria applicable to educational facilities constructed by district school boards and community college boards of trustees, efforts should be taken by

the Department to assist in the development of enforcement strategies.

- ◆ Facilities leased by State agencies from the private sector were not always evaluated by local emergency management personnel as to suitability for use as public hurricane evacuation shelters. As a result, use of such facilities as potential shelters was negated even though the current lease provisions may have allowed such use.
- ◆ As a result of including outdated wind speed standards in the law, the public hurricane evacuation shelter standards for State university facilities are less stringent than the public shelter design criteria required for district school board and community college facilities.
- ◆ As a result of the recent reorganization of the Florida education system, the duties and responsibilities of the State university system for the administration of hurricane shelter related activities are not clearly established in law. To ensure compliance with such requirements, the Legislature should amend the applicable provisions of law as deemed appropriate.
- ◆ To enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should implement a comprehensive Department-wide grants accounting and information system.

### INTRODUCTION

**Hurricane Shelters.** The State of Florida is surrounded by more than 8,400 miles of shoreline, which makes Florida's residents and visitors vulnerable to the devastating effects of

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hurricanes and high wind events. The quality and quantity of public hurricane evacuation shelter space in Florida is of critical concern to public safety since the Department has reported that an estimated one in four persons residing or visiting the State will seek public shelter. The Department has adopted the standards established by the American Red Cross for evaluating facilities for use as public hurricane evacuation shelters. The Department is responsible for coordinating emergency planning, preparedness, recovery, and mitigation for all natural and man made disasters that may occur in the State of Florida.

The high growth rate in Florida's population makes determining the need for public hurricane evacuation shelter space difficult. Although the Legislature has declared its intent to eliminate the State's deficit of shelter space in every region of the State, the Department's January 2000 report estimates a deficit of approximately 1.5 million shelter spaces. This estimate is based upon an assumption that each county of the State would be affected simultaneously by a severe hurricane. The Department has engaged in a comprehensive strategy to reduce the shelter space deficit that includes promoting the use of public shelter design criteria when constructing new facilities, surveying existing facilities to determine shelter space capacity and, when cost effective, assisting in retrofitting and mitigation techniques.

**Grant Management.** The administration of grant programs represents a significant part of the Department's operations. During the 2000-2001 fiscal year, expenditures for existing grant programs totaled approximately \$547 million. The majority of these programs included awards to multiple grant recipients. Each of the five service areas within the Department is responsible for the administration of grant programs in support of its mission, including emergency management, housing and community development, community planning, coastal management, and land preservation.

*FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
HURRICANE SHELTERS*

**Finding No. 1: Based upon reported progress to date, the retrofitting of facilities in geographic regions with shelter space deficits may not be completed within the timeframes established by law.**

In 1993, the Legislature expressed its intent that the State not have a deficit of safe public hurricane evacuation shelter space in any region of the State by 1998 and thereafter (see

Section 252.385, Florida Statutes). Accordingly, the Department is required to annually provide the Legislature and the Governor a listing of facilities recommended to be retrofitted using State moneys with priority being given to those facilities in regions with shelter space deficits. As amended in 2000, this law requires that the retrofitting of facilities in regions with shelter space deficits be completed by 2003, and that all facility retrofitting be completed by 2008. However, as described in the following paragraphs, our review indicates that these goals may not be achieved.

Every two years the Department is required to report on the status of the State's public hurricane evacuation shelters, including the identification of any deficits in shelter space that may exist within the State. We recognize that the determination of available shelter space is based upon standards established by the American Red Cross, including prescribed standards for the amount of space required for each evacuee (e.g., 20 square feet). We further recognize that any modification of these standards could significantly impact the Department's determination of available shelter space. Exhibit A to this report recaps the State's shelter space deficit as of January 2000 and the progress that has been made in increasing shelter spaces through June 30, 2001.

Between 1995 and June 2001, shelter capacity has increased by over 250,000 spaces as a result of retrofitting existing facilities and enhancing newly constructed facilities. Because there was no dedicated funding source for retrofitting prior to the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the majority of the progress in reducing the State's shelter space deficit has been made in the last two fiscal years. Department management is currently projecting approximately 240,000 additional shelter spaces will be added by June 2002. Table A recaps recent funding by source and purpose for increasing public hurricane evacuation shelter space:

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**Table A**

Funding Source	Purpose	Annual Appropriations	
		1999-2000	2000-2001
Grants and Donations Trust Fund (1)	School Shutters and Generators	\$ 2,265,000	\$ 3,000,000
	Local Emergency Management and Mitigation Initiative (2)	-	2,200,000
Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Trust Fund	School Generators	-	1,000,000
	Local Emergency Management and Mitigation Initiative (2)	-	2,366,174
United States Contributions Trust Fund	Retrofit of Existing Facilities	-	<u>9,500,000</u> (3)
Total		<u>\$ 2,265,000</u>	<u>\$ 18,066,174</u>

Notes: (1) Moneys transferred from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund.  
 (2) Includes other critical facility projects in addition to hurricane shelters.  
 (3) Excludes \$4,500,000 in local matching moneys.

Although progress has been made in reducing the shelter space deficit through retrofitting and enhancing newly constructed facilities, the statutorily-established timeframe of 2003 for the completion of retrofitting in regions with a deficit may not be achieved. Several factors have contributed to the inability to complete facility retrofitting within established timeframes, including the increasing number of potential projects to be evaluated, and the number of grants to be administered by the Department.

Although over \$18 million was appropriated for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, the Department's *2001 Shelter Retrofit Report* identifies over 300 additional unfunded projects totaling in excess of \$31 million that were recommended for retrofitting. Inasmuch as the level of funding provided to the Department for retrofitting projects identified in its annual reports and other related factors significantly impact the Department's ability to meet established timeframes, the establishment of statutory completion dates for retrofit projects may not be practical. We recommend that the Department continue its efforts to provide the Legislature and the Governor with timely and accurate information regarding the deficit in available hurricane evacuation shelter space Statewide.

**Finding No. 2: Current law does not provide enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with the public shelter design criteria applicable to educational facilities constructed by district school boards and community college district boards of trustees.**

All public educational and ancillary facilities constructed by a district school board or community college district board of trustees are required by law to incorporate public shelter

design criteria, thereby ensuring (with certain exceptions) that such facilities could be used as hurricane evacuation shelters. In those instances in which a district school board or community college specifically exempts a newly constructed facility from the public shelter design criteria provisions, the concurrence of the local emergency management agency or the Department is required. Subject to evaluation by local emergency management personnel, qualifying facilities are identified as enhanced hurricane protection areas.

Prior to July 1, 2001, public shelter design criteria were included in the *State Uniform Building Code for Public Educational Facilities Construction*, promulgated by the Florida Department of Education. Subsequently, the law (Section 235.26, Florida Statutes) was modified to require the construction of educational facilities by district school boards and community colleges pursuant to the *Florida Building Code*. Although this law change affected the guidelines governing the construction of these educational facilities, the specifications requiring the inclusion of the public shelter design criteria remained in place.

To evaluate the effectiveness of these statutory requirements in reducing the deficit of hurricane shelter space, we reviewed the construction records of selected district school boards and community colleges. We examined information provided by 20 district school boards and 10 community colleges for 164 newly constructed or planned facilities for which the public shelter design criteria appeared to be applicable. However, we noted that in 53 instances, documentation was not available to evidence the incorporation of the public shelter design criteria, nor was documentation provided evidencing that the local

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emergency management agency or the Department had exempted that specific construction project from the requirements of the law. In some instances, local emergency management personnel indicated that they were not aware that the new educational facilities were under construction. As a result, there is an increased risk that these educational facilities will not be suitable for use as hurricane shelters.

According to Department personnel, the district school boards and community colleges constructing new facilities must incur 2 to 5 percent in additional project costs in order to incorporate the public shelter design criteria. However, both Department and local emergency management personnel agree that the cost to incorporate these criteria during initial construction remains less than the costs associated with the subsequent retrofitting of such facilities. For example, in one district school board facility, the cost to incorporate a component of the public shelter design criteria during the construction of a new facility was estimated by local emergency management personnel to have been \$70,000. However, costs to retrofit this facility for suitability as a shelter was estimated to be \$116,000.

Inasmuch as the cost of new construction is significantly less than cost of retrofitting these facilities, increased emphasis should be placed on ensuring the compliance of district school boards and community colleges to incorporate such criteria at the time of initial construction. We recommend that the Department, in consultation with the Legislature, the Florida Department of Education, and local emergency management personnel, continue its efforts to ensure that district school boards and community colleges comply with the provisions of law requiring the inclusion of the public shelter design criteria in all applicable new educational facility construction. Such efforts should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the implementation of specific enforcement provisions within the law and/or applicable rules.

**Finding No. 3: Facilities leased by State agencies from the private sector were not always evaluated by local emergency management personnel as to suitability for use as public hurricane evacuation shelters.**

When State agencies enter into private sector lease agreements for facilities, they are required by law (Section 252.385(4)(b), Florida Statutes) to include provisions in the lease agreement that would authorize the use of the facility, if deemed suitable, as a public hurricane evacuation shelter. Suitable leased public facilities are defined as those that are solely occupied by State agencies and that have at least 2,000 square feet of net floor area in a single room or in a combination of rooms having a

minimum of 400 square feet in each room and meet various structural and other requirements. To implement the law, the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) has developed a public hurricane evacuation shelter addendum (Addendum) to the standard State agency lease agreement effective October 1, 2000.

Our review of leases entered into by selected State agencies during the period October 1, 2000, through January 31, 2001, disclosed that at least 10 leases (relating to 6 State agencies) had executed an Addendum. However, in response to our inquiry, personnel from these 6 State agencies indicated that they had not notified local emergency management personnel in order to assess the suitability of the facility as a shelter.

In order for the law to be effective in providing additional public hurricane evacuation shelter spaces, local emergency management personnel should be made aware of all leased public facilities that meet the square footage and occupancy requirement so that the facilities can be evaluated as potential public hurricane evacuation shelters.

We recommend that the Legislature consider amending Section 252.385(4)(b), Florida Statutes, to require all State agencies entering into lease agreements with the private sector to contact the local emergency management personnel to facilitate the evaluation of the leased public facilities for use as a hurricane shelter. We further recommend that the Department, in consultation with the DMS, provide additional guidance to State agencies regarding the application of these requirements.

**Finding No. 4: As a result of including outdated wind speed standards, the public hurricane evacuation shelter standards required by law for State university facilities are less stringent than the public shelter design criteria required for district school board and community college facilities.**

In those instances in which a State university is located in a geographic region without sufficient public hurricane evacuation shelter space, the university is required by law (Section 240.295(4), Florida Statutes) to ensure that applicable new facility projects be constructed in accordance with public shelter standards. This provision is applicable to any campus building for which a design contract is entered into subsequent to July 1, 2001, when the local emergency management agency or the Department concurs as to the appropriateness of the building for use as a shelter.

The law also requires that a 5-year capital improvements program be submitted annually to the Legislature and the

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Governor. This 5-year program must identify the new or retrofitted facilities that will incorporate enhanced hurricane resistance standards and that can be used as public hurricane evacuation shelters. Although these enhanced hurricane resistance standards are similar to the public shelter design criteria applicable to district school board and community college facility projects, Department personnel have indicated that the requirements related to wind protection are less stringent than those contained in the public shelter design criteria. Section 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, currently includes criteria based upon maximum wind speeds established in 1993. However, subsequent increases in the wind speed standards have not been reflected through modification in this law.

University facilities that incorporate these enhanced hurricane resistance standards in any retrofitting or new construction projects may not be as disaster resistant as the district school board and community college facilities that incorporate the public shelter design criteria. To ensure the consistent application of shelter specifications for all district school board, community college, and university facilities, we recommend that the Legislature consider amending Section 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, to require State universities to incorporate the public shelter design criteria in any retrofitting or new construction projects.

**Finding No. 5: As a result of the recent reorganization of the Florida education system, the Legislature should also consider amending applicable provisions of law related to the administration of hurricane evacuation shelters by the State university system.**

Section 252.385(2), Florida Statutes, requires that the Department administer a program to survey certain existing public facilities, including universities, for use as public hurricane evacuation shelters. The law also requires the Board of Regents and the Florida Department of Education to be responsible for coordinating and implementing the survey of universities with the Department or local emergency management personnel.

Additionally, Section 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, requires the Board of Regents to:

- ◆ Assess existing facilities to identify the extent to which each campus has public hurricane evacuation shelter space;

- ◆ Submit annually to the Governor and the Legislature a 5-year capital improvements program that identifies new or retrofitted facilities that will incorporate enhanced hurricane resistance standards and that can be used as public hurricane evacuation shelters; and
- ◆ Submit proposed facility retrofit projects to the Department for assessment and inclusion in the annual report prepared in accordance with Section 252.385(3), Florida Statutes.

Notwithstanding the statutory provisions noted above, recent legislation abolished the Board of Regents, effective July 1, 2001, and transferred many of the duties and responsibilities previously assigned to the Board of Regents to the Florida Board of Education. Similarly, the Board of Trustees of each university and the Department of Education's Division of Colleges and Universities have assumed new responsibilities in regard to the State university system activities.

To clearly establish in the law the responsibilities for the performance of specific activities within the State university system related to the administration of hurricane evacuation shelters, we recommend that the Legislature amend Sections 252.385(2), and 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, as appropriate.

*FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION  
GRANT MANAGEMENT*

**Finding No. 6: To enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should implement a comprehensive Department-wide grants accounting and information system.**

The Department currently manages fiscal and programmatic grant information using separate systems and spreadsheet applications. These systems and spreadsheet applications do not interface with each other nor do they interface with the Florida Accounting and Information Resource Subsystem (FLAIR) records. A Department-wide grants accounting and information system would facilitate financial record keeping and production of financial reports, promote a coordinated monitoring process and ensure compliance with the Federal and State Single Audit Acts and the requirements of each grant agreement, and provide information on all Department grant programs. Such information should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- ◆ grant name and number;
- ◆ grant recipient;

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- ◆ grant funds awards and disbursements (or expenditures);
- ◆ grant status;
- ◆ amounts of any cash advanced; and
- ◆ status of monitoring and audit reports, including follow-up and resolution.

A Department-wide grants accounting and information system would also allow program managers to access detailed information needed for program administration, while upper-level managers would be able to access summary status information appropriate for their respective oversight responsibilities.

In the absence of a comprehensive system, the Department's Office of Inspector General and program managers had limited ability to monitor grant programs in a coordinated manner, as well as to ensure compliance with the Federal and State Single Audit Acts and the requirements of each grant agreement. For example, our review indicated that, in the absence of a comprehensive grants accounting and information system:

- ◆ A listing of all grant programs and recipients was not routinely prepared, thereby limiting management's ability to identify and readily access such information.
- ◆ Significant grant monitoring and audit findings and the status of those findings were not available to all program managers.
- ◆ The Department's ability to determine the reasonableness of amounts reported on recipients' Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) and Schedule of State Financial Assistance was limited. Such determinations would assist the Department to ensure that recipients met applicable Federal and State Single Audit Act Requirements and the requirements of each grant agreement.

Our review further disclosed that financial record keeping and production of financial reports were not always performed efficiently, and summary information on Department grants was limited. For example:

- ◆ Fiscal data is maintained by the Department in FLAIR, other systems, and spreadsheet applications. Each program area also maintains fiscal and program specific information in separate systems and/or spreadsheet applications. Because these systems do not interface, grant information is often duplicated among the systems and multiple reconciliations with data in FLAIR must be

prepared. Even though these procedures appear adequate for maintaining accounting records, production of financial reports, and program administration, such a process is neither economical nor efficient.

- ◆ The SEFA was prepared by the Department using data maintained in several separate systems. The SEFA could be prepared more efficiently if all the data was maintained in a single accounting system.
- ◆ Department, Division, and Bureau summary level status reports and other information must be requested as needed since they are not readily accessible to Department managers.

We recognize that the Department has recently made progress in designing systems that would serve as a Department-wide system or systems. The Department has developed design specifications for the Grants, Rent, Appropriations, Supply, and Payroll system (GRASP). According to Department personnel this system is being designed to replace several spreadsheet applications that currently monitor grant availability, distribution, and income, and will interface with FLAIR. The Department's efforts also include development of an Agency Grants Information Database, which is intended to create a framework for a system that will allow the Department to access common grant management information (a common database) presently available from several, independent grant management systems currently in operation.

These systems, if properly developed and implemented, may assist the Department in addressing several of the concerns noted above. However, in order to enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should continue its efforts to obtain and/or develop and implement a Department-wide grants accounting and management information system which incorporates the key elements of such a system as discussed previously.

***SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, AND METHODOLOGY***

The scope of this audit focused on the Department's efforts in reducing the hurricane shelter deficit and its efforts in grant administration, including the implementation of a Department-wide grant management system. Our specific objectives were:

- ◆ To determine the progress made in the elimination of the deficit of hurricane shelters, the assessment of hurricane shelters as to compliance with American Red Cross Standards, and the use of grant moneys used to retrofit public hurricane evacuation shelters.

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- ◆ To assess the Department's efforts related to the development and implementation of a comprehensive Department-wide grant accounting and management information systems.
- ◆ To assess the Department's efforts related to the grant selection process, grant recipient monitoring efforts, and Department-wide communications for grant management.

Our overall objectives were:

- ◆ To determine the extent to which the Department's management controls promoted and encouraged achievement of management's objectives in the categories of compliance with controlling laws, administrative rules, and other guidelines; economic and efficient operations; reliability of records and reports; and the safeguarding of assets.
- ◆ To evaluate the performance of the Department's management in achieving compliance with controlling laws, administrative rules, and other guidelines; the economic, efficient, and effective operation of State Government; the reliability of records and reports; and the safeguarding of assets.

In conducting the audit, we reviewed applicable management controls and related records, and we examined various transactions and records, conducted interviews with Department personnel, and performed various other procedures/tests as determined necessary. Our audit included examinations of various transactions (as well as events and conditions) occurring during the audit period July 1999 through January 2001.

*AUTHORITY*

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.45, Florida Statutes, I have directed that this report be prepared to present the results of our operational audit.

*William O. Monroe*  
William O. Monroe, CPA  
Auditor General

*AUDITEE RESPONSE*

As required by law, our preliminary and tentative findings and recommendations were provided to the Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs. In a letter dated October 16, 2001, the Secretary generally concurred with our findings and recommendations. For a more comprehensive understanding of the Secretary's response, please see the Auditor General's Web site, where the response may be viewed in its entirety.

To promote accountability in government and improvement in government operations, the Auditor General makes operational audits of selected programs, activities, and functions of State agencies. This operational audit was made in accordance with applicable **Government Auditing Standards** issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. This audit was conducted by Elizabeth Annette Marshall, CPA and supervised by Marcella A. Strange, CPA. Please address inquiries regarding this report to David F. Westberry, CPA, Audit Manager, via E-mail at [davewestberry@aud.state.fl.us](mailto:davewestberry@aud.state.fl.us) or by telephone at (850) 488-0961.

This report and audit reports prepared by the Auditor General can be obtained on our Web site (<http://www.state.fl.us/audgen>); by telephone (850 487-9024); or by mail (G74 Claude Pepper Building, 111 West Madison Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1450).

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**EXHIBIT A**

Shelter Recap By Region					
Region	Region Name (Counties in the Region)	Shelter Spaces Needed*	Shelter Spaces Available*	Shelter Space Deficit*	Shelter Space Increases**
1	West Florida (Bay, Escambia, Holmes, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Washington)	57,190	44,401	(12,789)	6,239
2	Apalachee (Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla)	26,660	17,210	(9,450)	1,030
3	North Central Florida (Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Union)	29,702	7,807	(21,895)	4,385
4	Northeast Florida (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns)	64,610	13,920	(50,690)	3,893
5	Withlacoochee (Citrus, Hernando, Levy, Marion, Sumter)	62,145	1,615	(60,530)	7,105
6	East Central Florida (Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Volusia)	80,300	34,695	(45,605)	44,631
7	Central Florida (DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee, Polk)	95,145	431	(94,714)	1,446
8	Tampa Bay (Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas)	367,794	31,034	(336,760)	15,219
9	Southwest Florida (Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Sarasota)	242,490	17,640	(224,850)	32,122
10	Treasure Coast (Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, St. Lucie)	121,639	19,167	(102,472)	29,216
11	South Florida (Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe)	<u>628,931</u>	<u>86,754</u>	<u>(542,177)</u>	<u>105,068</u>
	Total	<u>1,776,606</u>	<u>274,674</u>	<u>(1,501,932)</u>	<u>250,354</u>
* As of January 2000, Emergency Shelter Plan					
** From 1995 through June 30, 2001					



STATE OF FLORIDA  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**  
*"Dedicated to making Florida a better place to call home"*

**JEB BUSH**  
Governor

**STEVEN M. SEIBERT**  
Secretary

October 16, 2001

Mr. William O. Monroe, CPA  
Auditor General  
Post Office Box 1735  
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

RE: Preliminary and Tentative Audit Findings, Operational Audit of the Florida  
Department of Community Affairs

Dear Mr. Monroe:

We have reviewed the preliminary and tentative audit findings and recommendations included with your letter dated September 18, 2001. As required by Section 11.45(4)(d), Florida Statutes, our response is attached.

We appreciate the recommendations, constructive comments, and technical assistance provided by your staff. If further information is needed, please contact Charles Anderson, our Inspector General, at 487-4658.

Very truly yours,

Steven M. Seibert  
Secretary

**2555 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD • TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-2100**  
Phone: (850) 488-8466/Suncom 278-8466 FAX: (850) 921-0781/Suncom 291-0781  
Internet address: <http://www.dca.state.fl.us>

**CRITICAL STATE CONCERN FIELD OFFICE**  
2796 Overseas Highway, Suite 212  
Marathon, FL 33050-2227  
(305) 289-2402

**COMMUNITY PLANNING**  
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100  
(850) 488-2356

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100  
(850) 413-9969

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2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100  
(850) 488-7956

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

OPERATIONAL AUDIT

RESPONSE TO PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE AUDIT FINDINGS

**Finding No. 1:** Based upon reported progress to date, the retrofitting of facilities in geographic regions with shelter space deficits may not be completed within the time frames established by law.

We recommend that the Department continue its efforts to provide the Legislature and the Governor with timely and accurate information regarding the deficit in available hurricane evacuation shelter space Statewide.

**Response:** Agree with Finding. The Division believes the time frames in statute represent goals established by the Legislature. As the audit points out, achieving these goals is dependent on the funding streams made available to the Division for shelter retrofit projects. Although much progress has been made, the shelter deficit statewide has not been eliminated.

**Finding No. 2:** Current law does not provide enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with the public shelter design criteria applicable to educational facilities constructed by district school boards and community college district boards of trustees.

We recommend that the Department, in consultation with the Legislature, the Florida Department of Education, and local emergency management personnel, continue its efforts to ensure that district school boards and community colleges comply with the provisions of law requiring the inclusion of the public shelter design criteria in all applicable new educational facility construction. Such efforts should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the implementation of specific enforcement provisions within the law and/or applicable rules.

**Response:** The Division will continue its outreach efforts with affected parties to ensure that there is a clear understanding regarding the law's requirements.

**Finding No. 3:** Facilities leased by State agencies from the private sector were not always evaluated by local emergency management personnel as to suitability for use as public hurricane evaluation shelters.

We recommend that the Legislature consider amending Section 252.385(4)(b), Florida Statutes, to require all State agencies entering into lease agreements with the private sector to contact their local emergency management personnel to facilitate the evaluation of the leased public facilities for use as a hurricane shelter. We further recommend that the Department, in consultation with the DMS, provide additional guidance to State agencies regarding the application of these requirements.

**Response:** The Division is confident that this can be accomplished by DMS providing a list of leased space by county for review and evaluation by local officials.

**Finding No. 4:** As a result of including outdated wind speed standards, the public hurricane evacuation shelter standards required by law for State university facilities are less stringent than the public shelter design criteria required for district school board and community college facilities.

To ensure the consistent application of shelter specifications for all district school board, community college, and university facilities, we recommend that the Legislature consider amending Section 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, to require State universities to incorporate the public shelter design criteria in any retrofitting or new construction projects.

**Response:** The Division agrees that the public shelter design criteria should be consistent across facility type.

**Finding No. 5:** As a result of the recent reorganization of the Florida education system, the Legislature should also consider amending applicable provisions of law related to the administration of hurricane evacuation shelters by the State university system.

To clearly establish in the law the responsibilities for the performance of specific activities within the State university system related to the administration of hurricane evacuation shelters, we recommend that the Legislature amend Section 252.385(2), and 240.295(4), Florida Statutes, as appropriate.

**Response:** The Division agrees with this recommendation.

**Finding No. 6:** To enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should implement a comprehensive Department-wide grants accounting and information system.

In order to enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should continue its effort to obtain and/or develop and implement a Department-wide grants accounting and management information system which incorporates the key elements of such a system as discussed previously.

**Response:** I agree with the contents of Finding No. 6, in order to enhance the economic and efficient administration of grant programs, the Department should implement a comprehensive Department-wide grants accounting and information system.

This agency in coordination with the State Technology Office, is in a transition phase to integrate information technology staff and resources across the executive branch of state government. One of the critical issues that was recognized to be examined in the 1999-2000 State Annual Report on Enterprise Resource Planning and Management was data management which includes, but not limited to, integration and data sharing and coordination and standards.

However, before taking on such a major state-wide issue, this agency must recognize that the key to data management is that data and software is a major state asset. This asset must be budgeted, must have full management “buy in” and must have technology staff to manage it. Once the agency recognizes these needs for technology resources, the agency can begin creating a comprehensive Department-wide grants accounting and information systems that will provide accurate information to government managers and to taxpayers.