New Jersey State Legislature
Office of Legislative Services
Office of the State Auditor

Department of Corrections
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women

July 1, 2000 to February 28, 2002

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State Auditor
The Honorable James E. McGreevey  
Governor of New Jersey

The Honorable John O. Bennett  
President of the Senate

The Honorable Richard J. Codey  
President of the Senate

The Honorable Albio Sires  
Speaker of the General Assembly

Mr. Albert Porroni  
Executive Director  
Office of Legislative Services

Enclosed is our report on the audit of the Department of Corrections, Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women for the period July 1, 2000 to February 28, 2002. If you would like a personal briefing, please call me at (609) 292-3700.

September 17, 2002
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Department of Corrections  
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women

**Scope**

We have completed an audit of the Department of Corrections, Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women for the period July 1, 2000 to February 28, 2002. Our audit included financial activities accounted for in the state’s General Fund. Our review did not include the inmate commissary fund, inmate trust fund and welfare fund, since these funds are subject to a Department of Corrections internal audit review.

Annual expenditures are approximately $35 million. The prime responsibility of the facility is to provide custody and treatment programs for female offenders.

**Objectives**

The objectives of our audit were to determine whether financial transactions were related to the facility’s programs, were reasonable, and were recorded properly in the accounting systems. We also tested for resolution of significant conditions noted in our prior report.

This audit was conducted pursuant to the State Auditor’s responsibilities as set forth in Article VII, Section 1, Paragraph 6 of the State Constitution and Title 52 of the New Jersey Statutes.

**Methodology**

Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

In preparation for our testing, we studied legislation, administrative code, circular letters promulgated by the State Comptroller, and policies of the facility. Provisions that we considered significant were documented and compliance with those requirements was verified by interview, observation, and through our samples of financial transactions. We also read the budget message, reviewed financial trends, compared expenditures to other correctional
facilities, and interviewed facility personnel to obtain an understanding of the programs and the internal controls.

A nonstatistical sampling approach was used. Our samples of financial transactions were designed to provide conclusions about the validity of transactions as well as internal control and compliance attributes. Sample populations were sorted and transactions were judgmentally selected for testing.

To ascertain the status of findings included in our prior report, we identified corrective action taken, if any, by the facility and walked through the system to determine if the correction action was effective.

Conclusions

We found that the financial transactions included in our testing were related to the facility’s programs, were reasonable, and were properly recorded in the accounting systems. In making this determination, we noted operating inefficiencies and an internal control weakness meriting management’s attention. We also found that the facility has resolved the significant issues noted in our prior report.
The facility is overproducing inmate meals.

Meals

The facility annually prepares 1.6 million meals for inmates and staff costing $2.4 million. In addition, the facility prepares 2 million meals annually for other state facilities. According to management, the number of daily meals is based on a history of meals served. The facility is supposed to prepare meal serving logs to monitor actual meals served. This log is used to adjust the daily meal production so as not to overproduce meals. However, our test disclosed only 30 percent of the logs were completed as to the meals served, resulting in a meal production level higher than actual meals consumed. Based on an internal review of food waste over a one week period in August 2002, the facility disposes 1.3 tons of food waste daily or more than 450 tons annually. Complete and accurate meal serving logs, if used properly, could reduce meal production levels and reduce costs.

Recommendation

We recommend that the facility improve their record keeping on the meal serving logs and use them to reduce the meal production to an acceptable level.

Auditee’s Response

The department accepts your audit finding that controls were not in place to ensure meal logs were prepared for each meal, resulting in an overproduction of food. With the recent assignment of an Acting Supervisor, Regional Service Operations, clear direction has been given to ensure completion of meal logs on a daily basis to eliminate overproduction of meals. The department will closely monitor menu selections, meal attendance, food production and food waste.

The Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women is a regional food production kitchen which prepares three meals per day for approximately 3,300 individuals at four facilities: Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women, Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility, Hunterdon Developmental Center (HDC) and Stokes Satellite
Unit seven days a week. In addition, it should be noted that alternate entrees are prepared for all meals provided for HDC residents.

The audit cites that the facility disposed of 1.3 tons of food daily, inferring that such waste can be eliminated. The report, however, does not define food waste. Such waste consists of the following:

- Food preparation waste (food production kitchen)
- Plate waste (uneaten food)
- Liquids (juices; coffee; soup)
- Other waste materials (coffee grounds, etc.)

There are several components of food waste, as defined above, which are unavoidable and acceptable. The degree to which these types of food waste contributed to the 1.3 tons of daily waste during the audit period is not known with any accuracy.

It is our contention that the 1.3 tons cited in the report does not fairly represent “food waste” at the institution. However, as a result of this finding, food service staff at the Edna Mahan facility have attempted to remove much of the liquids from the waste deposited in the food bins. A significant decrease in the volume of food waste in the bins has been observed since the audit was conducted.

The methods of hauling and disposing garbage should be improved to reduce cost.

Garbage Cost

Garbage cost at the facility is high as compared to other nearby state facilities, as shown by the following chart.
Facility | Annual Cost | Population | Cost per Capita |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility | $254,000 | 1,140 | $223 |
Mountainview Correctional Facility | 131,000 | 1,295 | 101 |
Hunterdon Developmental Center | 92,000 | 624 | 147 |
Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital | 38,000 | 275 | 138 |

Garbage cost is high due to hauling of partially filled compactors and using an inefficient method of disposing cardboard. We observed the garbage hauler picking up partially filled compactors. When we brought this to management’s attention, the garbage hauler began picking up filled compactors. This could reduce annual garbage cost by $50,000. In addition, the facility did not bail their cardboard as do supermarkets and South Woods Prison. A salvage company can remove bailed cardboard for free or pay the facility a fee when the market warrants. By purchasing a bailer, there could be an annual cost savings of $20,000. Currently, the facility is seeking to buy a bailer.

**Recommendation**

We recommend the facility reduce garbage cost by having filled compactors picked up and installing a cardboard bailer.

**Auditee’s Response**

The department recognizes the inefficiencies identified in the audit report which have resulted in high garbage costs at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. The institution has immediately implemented the following measures to reduce future costs:

- Trash pick ups have been reduced from twice per week to one pick up per week to eliminate the hauling of partially filled containers. The reduced number of pickups will be continued.
unless there are problems with sanitation, vermin, and other infestations.

- A bailer for cardboard has been ordered with a delivery date of October 2002. Once received, all cardboard will be bailed.