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To: Clerks of the Circuit Court
From: Gregory Youchock, Chief of Court Services
Date: March 21, 2003
Subject: **OBTS Technical Memo 03-01**

The following memorandum implements changes to the SRS manual. These changes are in effect as of the date of this memorandum. Please update your SRS manuals as necessary and ensure that appropriate staff are notified. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

1. OBTS Section Page 10-14 2nd paragraph beginning "To accomodate this change, ... ": Delete and replace with the following (grey box note).

Note: The OBTS submission layout has been extended from 750 to 770 characters to allow for the reporting of the 20 character UCN at the end of the record. Other minor adjustments to the OBTS layout may also necessary to accomodate the UCN. Such adjustments are under review by the OBTS Workgroup and will be promulgated when available. No alterations to the OBTS submission layout should be made until said changes are incorporated into the Criminal Justice Data Element Dictionary or until otherwise directed by the OBTS Workgroup.

2. OBTS Section Page 10-14 4th paragraph beginning with "The Supreme Court Order ... ": Delete and replace with the following.

The Supreme Court Order specifies that all parts of the 20 character UCN are mandatory for state reporting purposes. Some conditions are defined in the Order such as the description of the subfields within the UCN. One requirement necessary to state reporting is that the UCN must be continuous, no spaces are allowed. With respect to SRS/OBTS reporting, the UCN/Sequence Number pair in the OBTS record serves as the unique identifier of a case record. In circuit court, the UCN/Sequence Number pair is the only unique identifier for an OBTS case record. Consequently, SRS/OBTS reporting imposes some additional conditions on the content of the UCN, particularly in the Party/Identifier and Branch Location subfields.

3. OBTS Section Page 10-14 Last paragraph beginning with "For SRS, the Party Identifier field ... ": Delete and replace with the following.

For SRS, the Party/Defendant Identifier subfield (position 15-18 of UCN) is used to identify the defendants associated with a case. This field is analogous to the alphabetic suffix commonly added to the current local case numbers. In multi-defendant cases, the first four subfields of the UCN are frequently

the same to facilitate case management. The party/defendant subfield then serves to distinguish each defendant associated with the case which, in turn, ensures a unique case record identifier. In single defendant cases, the party/defendant identifier trivially identifies the only defendant. Although there is considerable flexibility in formatting the party/defendant identifier relating to the UCNs use for public display, some constraints must be placed on this subfield for state reporting. These constraints are necessary to ensure uniqueness of the case record, eliminate potential ambiguities and to provide some statewide consistency which is necessary for analysis and tracking. For example, to ensure uniqueness and clarity, party/defendant identifier subfield cannot contain four of the same character. Thus 'XXXX', 'AAAA', '0000', etc. are not allowed.

The simplest and preferred implementation would be to continue the alphabetic suffixing scheme currently in use by most counties. That is, the letter A, placed in the first position of the subfield, will identify the first (or only) defendant of a case, B for the second defendant and so on. The remaining three positions should be filled in with X's since spaces are not provided for in the UCN. When all letters of the alphabet are used in the first position, the county can begin with the second position and so on through all four positions of the subfield. Thus, the party identifier subfield might look like 'AXXX', 'BXXX', 'ZDXX', 'ZZLX' and so on. Up to 456,872 defendants may be associated with a case in this manner. Note that, as above, 'XXXX' is not valid. Another option might be to use all numeric values such as '0001', '0002', ... , '9998' allowing for up to 9990 defendants to be associated with a single case. Again, '0000', '9999', '2222' and so on would not be allowed.

There is some provision in this subfield to allow a county to capture additional case related data that might be lost in the transition from a local case numbering scheme to the uniform case numbering scheme. Should this be required, the party identifier subfield may be split into two separate subfields with positions 1 & 2 (15 & 16 of the UCN) reserved for the additional information the county wishes to capture and positions 3 & 4 (17 & 18 of the UCN) reserved for the party/defendant identifier. Information placed in positions 1 & 2 of the party identifier must be alphanumeric but is otherwise unrestricted. Positions 3 & 4 are constrained as normal for the party/defendant identifier field. Please contact the OSCA OBTS coordinator to discuss possible implementations. The four(two) character constraint outlined above still applies, however, even when partitioning the subfield.

This provision provides a great deal of flexibility in the accounting of case data at the local level. However, one is cautioned against using this subfield to record information that may change during the life of a case. This caution is necessary because the UCN is part of the case record identifier. Thus, any change to any part of the UCN will be interpreted as a new and different case record for SRS purposes. Consequently, changes to the UCN will require the clerk to request that the OSCA delete the original case record from their case tracking systems and subsequently, resubmit the case record with the changed data. As this is not a simple process, the OSCA recommends consistent and limited coding within this field.

If you have questions or comments concerning the content of this technical memorandum, please contact PJ Stockdale (stockdap@flcourts.org, 850.410.1523) or Jim Brown (brownj@flcourts.org, 850.488.8622)

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