

# **INTERNAL CONTROL NEWS**

## **SEPTEMBER 2017**

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to provide departments with articles on good business practices, internal controls, and responsibilities. Through articles intended to promote educational and professional development opportunities for employees, this newsletter seeks to raise awareness across state government on the importance of internal controls. We hope that by providing this array of information, we can keep you informed of internal control related activities, and help you implement and maintain effective controls in your areas of operation.

## **VISION Upgrade Project**

The Department of Finance and Management is excited to share that in July, the VISION Upgrade to v9.2 Project officially kicked off! The department has partnered with Sierra-Cedar, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in government systems implementations.



VISION is an Oracle PeopleSoft v8.8 financial system that has not been upgraded since 2007. Moving forward with this critical initiative will provide Vermont State employees a fully supported and updated system. All VISION modules will be upgraded.

This new version of VISION is expected to go live in late 2018. Throughout the duration of the project, expect to see clear and consistent project communications from the Organizational Change Management (OCM) Team. Should you have any questions or concerns on the project, please feel free to e-mail the team at: [VISION.Upgrade@vermont.gov](mailto:VISION.Upgrade@vermont.gov)

## **From VISION Support...**

To assist our VISION customers, here are some tips and answers to frequently asked questions:



### ❖ **VISION Module Support web page**

A portal webpage called [VISION Module Support](#) has been created that groups, by VISION module, relevant information such as training material, policies, bulletins, best practices, forms, procedures, closing instructions, etc.

### ❖ **Security Forms**

- **VISION Expense Access Request Form** (re: changes to an existing user)

When requesting changes to **multiple sections** (e.g., chartfields and supervisor) of the [form](#)... select "Update User" from the dropdown list and complete the entire "User

Information” section, then complete only those sections/fields that are being changed. Also, please utilize the “Additional Information” field at the bottom of the form to further explain what you want to change; we do read the comments and find them helpful.

**Supervisor changes** require completion of both the *former supervisor* and *current supervisor* fields as well as their *employee ID* numbers in the “Employee Supervisor Changes” section. Also, the *supervisor* field in the “User Information” section should be the **new** supervisor – *not* the former supervisor. We will send the forms back if these fields are not completed. Lastly, be sure to verify the spelling of names and email addresses.

#### – **VISION Operator Access Request Form**

Please fill out the [form](#) correctly and obtain **ALL required signatures**. Before submitting the form, please verify the accuracy and completeness of all information, and be sure that the security level(s) being requested is appropriate for the employee’s position and responsibilities. Forms will be returned if not completed correctly, which causes a delay in setup.

#### ❖ **Passwords**

Have you forgotten what your VISION password is? You are not alone. The good news is you can have a new password emailed to you by setting up “I forgot my password” help. This is a one-time setup, and will help reset your password faster. Login to VISION and navigate to: **Main Menu > My System Profile > Change or setup forgotten password help**

→ For further instructions on how to “Set Up Forgotten Password Help and Email”, please refer to the “**Getting Started with VISION**” document on the [VISION Manuals](#) webpage.

#### ❖ **Frequently Asked VISION Questions**

##### **Expense Module -**

**Q:** I’m an approver and will be out of the office for several days or longer, what should I do?

**A:** Set up an **Alternate Approver** so that expense reports will not be stuck in your approval queue. Setting up an alternate approver is quick and painless using the following navigation: **Main Menu > My System Profile > Alternate User**

**Q:** What should I do with my receipts for expenses?

**A:** Contact your Expense Coordinator for information on how to handle your receipts. Each department has their own business process.

**Q:** What is my department’s blackout period?

**A:** Expense questions about blackout periods need to be referred to your department’s expense coordinator. Finance & Management does not determine blackout periods, they are department specific.

**Q:** What expense type should I choose?

**A:** For guidance in selecting the proper expense type please refer to the “**Expanded List of Expense Types**” document on the [Employee Travel and Expenses](#) webpage; this webpage is a comprehensive resource for all things expense-related.

### **Accounts Payable Module -**

**Q:** Why hasn't my voucher been paid?

**A:** There's a resource guide, "**Things to look at when a voucher does not get paid**", on the [Accounts Payable](#) webpage to help you problem-solve why a payment hasn't been made to a vendor.

### **All Modules -**

**Q:** What query/report can I run that will give me the information that I need?

**A:** There is a [Reporting Manual](#) webpage that lists all reports and queries available by module. Each manual includes the purpose of the report, the prompts and, in the case of queries, the fields that will be returned.

**Q:** Why is my new password that was just emailed to me from clicking on "I forgot my Password" not working?

**A:** If you have attempted to log into VISION unsuccessfully 3 times or more, your VISION account has been locked. You must contact the VISION Helpdesk at 828-6700 option 2 or [VISION.FinHelpdesk@vermont.gov](mailto:VISION.FinHelpdesk@vermont.gov) to have your account unlocked so that your new password will work.

## **A Look Back...**

[...] "it has become apparent that the internal control structure throughout much of the State has deteriorated over the past several years."

- Finding from the VT State Auditor's Annual Report for FY 2003 (issued December 2004).



In 2005, to address the above audit finding, the Secretary of Administration charged the Department of Finance & Management (F&M) with establishing a statewide internal control program. Internal controls are at the core of a department's ability to achieve their goals and objectives regarding effective and efficient operations, timely and accurate reporting, safeguarding of assets and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. More simply...internal control is what an organization does to provide reasonable assurance that the things they want to happen, *will happen*, and that the things they don't want to happen, *won't happen*.

Under the direction of the Director of Financial Operations, F&M embarked on this task with clear recognition that creating and fostering a **culture of control awareness** was essential. Attention to internal controls needed to become part of routine activities and discussions, not something that was pulled off the shelf once a year or added as an after-thought. As a result, F&M implemented and has maintained the following [tools](#) to assist departments: *Standards Guide for Managers, annual Self-Assessment of Internal Control, Best Business Practices, Operational Reviews* and *quarterly Newsletter*.

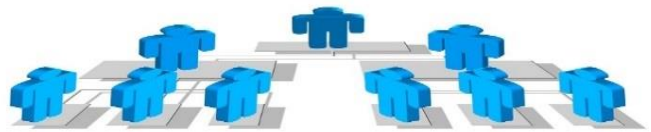
The table below compares the statewide results from the inaugural year of the *Self-Assessment* questionnaire to the most recent year. The data clearly reflects there have been notable gains but there's still progress to be made, **and** embracing the concept of continuous improvement for our internal control systems is crucial in our ever-changing business environments. While F&M has served as a catalyst, *providing the “nudge” factor*, to the extent there have been improvements and successes is a direct reflection on the shared commitment of the management and employees within our agencies and departments. Thank you!

- The percentage of ‘YES’ responses (YES%) is a key performance indicator; with a *YES* response, the department affirms the presence of a control activity, best practice and/or compliance with an administrative requirement.

Self-Assessment of Internal Control: Summary Results by Section*	FY 2005 YES%	FY 2017 YES%
Purchasing and Accounts Payable	83.1%	98.5%
Accounts Receivable and Cash Receipts	69.2%	92.9%
Fixed Assets	76.7%	97.5%
Inventory	53.8%	88.8%
Grants Administration	62.1%	95.5%
Budgeting	NA	100.0%
General Elements of Internal Control	81.9%	95.8%
Overall (all sections & questions)	78.8%	96.9%

\* Some questions have changed over the years but the primary objective of each section remains the same.

## F&M Happenings



- **Adam Greshin** was appointed Commissioner of Finance & Management effective July 10, 2017. Adam is a partner in Summit Ventures NE, LLC, which owns Sugarbush Resort, and prior to his appointment served as an Independent in the VT House of Representatives since 2009.
- **Matt Riven** was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Finance & Management effective August 21, 2017. Matt has over a decade of experience in VT State Government, most recently as Chief of Finance & Administration for the Judiciary and prior to that held the positions of Deputy CFO for the Agency of Human Services and Director of Budget & Management Operations (and Budget Analyst) for the Department of Finance & Management.
- **Chrissy Gilhuly** joined F&M as Executive Assistant on September 5, 2017. Chrissy brings over 6 years of government experience into her new role, first as legislative committee assistant for House Ways & Means, then executive assistant for the Department of Buildings

& General Services and, most recently, the supervisor for all committee assistants in the Office of Legislative Council.

- **Rich Donahey** joined F&M as Director of Budget & Management Operations on September 18, 2017. Rich comes to F&M after 7 years at the Agency of Human Services (AHS), including 5 years as a Financial Director in the AHS-Central Office and, most recently, as a Senior Policy & Operations Manager for the Department for Children & Families.
- **Emily Byrne**, former Director of Budget & Management Operations, has accepted a position with the Agency of Education as Chief Fiscal Officer. Her last day with the Department of Finance & Management was July 7, 2017.
- **Jana Riddle**, former Director of Change Management, has accepted a position with the Agency of Education as an IT Manager. Her last day with the Department of Finance and Management was September 1, 2017.
- Recent F&M **policy and procedure** updates<sup>1</sup> include:
  - [Best Practices #11: Fraud Awareness](#) – guidance to support departments in their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, waste and abuse.
  - [VISION Procedure #10: VISION Service Request \(VSR\)](#) – procedure and [form](#) (see ‘Other Forms’) for departments requesting new (or changed) VISION services or functionality.
  - [Uniform Guidance \(UG\) FAQs](#) (see ‘Federal Guidance’) – updated listing of frequently asked questions provided by the federal government about the **Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards** (aka Uniform Guidance).
  - [Grant Tracking Manual](#) - This version of the VISION training manual updates the existing exercises and adds several new ones.

<sup>1</sup>To receive notification of important updates directly into your Outlook inbox, subscribe to the [Latest News](#) feed from the F&M website. Instructions can be found in “[How to Add RSS Feed Directly to Outlook](#)” (see ‘VISION Job Aids’); upon initial setup all past “news” items will be delivered to your inbox, then moving forward new items will be emailed when they are posted. Should you have any questions, please contact the VISION Support Team at: [VISION.FINHelpDesk@vermont.gov](mailto:VISION.FINHelpDesk@vermont.gov).

**Internal Control News** is published quarterly by the Dept. of Finance & Management. Please contact [Kevin Gilman](#) with comments or suggestions. For past issues please visit: <http://finance.vermont.gov/reports-and-publications/internal-control-newsletters>