Challenges and Recommendations

The challenges faced by MT DOC are not unlike those we have observed with other state Departments of Corrections around the country. Paper-based processes require multiple rounds of data entry (sometimes duplicative), and critical communication happens via person to person (through phone or email) rather than in real-time through automation. Further, staff shortages and low retention rates contribute to increased job duties and overall workplace distress.

DOC staff have done an excellent job working within OMIS 3.0's capabilities and have implemented creative workarounds to address its limitations. Below and on the following pages, we identify specific challenges and outline recommendations for the MT DOC's consideration.

Challenges

Based on the fact-finding interviews and document review, we summarize the challenges observed in each functional area in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Challenges

Challenges	
ID No.	**Description**
Board of Pardons and Parole	
1	Hearing schedule and BOPP process management is conducted in a Microsoft Access database instead of OMIS, requiring double entry.
2	Parole conditions must be entered in OMIS manually.
3	The Victim Module in OMIS requires several clicks to navigate.
4	Medical information from DOC is received manually.
5	The staff sends more than 1,500 notifications manually per month, with no ability to track the notifications sent.
6	There is a glitch in the OMIS system that will disassociate the Offender from a note.
7	A change to a parole hearing schedule generally takes thirty minutes of work to correct, making rescheduling cumbersome.
8	End of the month dispositions from the hearings are uploaded, from Access, manually by staff. The uploads are not real-time.
Business Intelligence, Data Warehouse, and Reporting	
9	OMIS 3.0 has no offline capabilities, thus requiring Probation and Parole Officers manually reenter notes and information into OMIS when they have access to a secure connection. This also has implications for future tablet use within the institutions, as Officers may wish to use the tablets in an area without internet access within the facility and would be unable to do so.
10	OMIS 3.0 does not have the capability to accurately calculate length of stay due to the way movements are currently tracked (i.e., if an Offender leaves and visits a hospital). This is problematic should the DOC have to report such metrics to a Legislative body.
11	The volume of reports with over 1,000 reports and sub-reports. Some reports have zero usage, which might be attributed to a staff training issue. IT reported that 596 reports were used at least twice, while 288 have never been used. Most of these reports run off the

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	production database can contain sizable amounts of data, thereby slowing overall system efficiency.
Canteen and Commissary	
12	An Offender's clothing and personal items are maintained on an Excel spreadsheet and not documented in OMIS. Staff have no way of knowing if clothing or personal items belong rightfully to an Offender or if it was acquired through non-allowable means.
13	Documenting transaction information that is incorrect is performed manually.
14	Offenders often receive incorrect commissary orders, which can cause frustration and/or an Offender to file a Grievance (thereby requiring more staff time to respond and attempt to resolve the Grievance).
15	All commissary transactions involve paper-based processes with no electronic records stored in OMIS. Thus, there is no way to confirm if an Offender's Canteen and Commissary purchases were acquired through the proper channels. Additionally, there is no real-time manner for determining if the ordered goods are in stock, if they are allowable for the specific Offender, and if the Offender has sufficient funds in their Trust Account to pay for them.
16	Only one Unit can process a Commissary order at a time, resulting in over-selling commissary items when multiple Units submit orders simultaneously. This is due to the warehouse inventory updating in real-time using a batch process. Thus, if one Unit begins an order during another Unit's order, it can oversell commissary items.
17	Spending authority regulations require that commissary supply funds are spent based on the calendar year rather than Offender demand for goods. This may result in supply funds being expended part-way through the fiscal year, disabling the ability for Offenders to procure goods from the commissary.
18	Tracking which Offenders have access to restricted religious, hobby, and special-order items is a manual process and requires more staff time to approve and verify orders.
Caseload Management	
19	Case assignment and case load is tracked manually via Excel. As such, there is no consideration given to case complexity, nor is there the ability to track case assignment history in OMIS for Case Managers to review. Additionally, there is no way to track the effort required to manage caseloads.
20	Case Plan updates are partly detailed in Chrono notes. Chrono notes are not easily searchable nor are they guarded by role-based access. This means that to view an Offender's progress on his or her case plan, the reader must manually click and read each Chrono note (which may or may not have sensitive or private information).
21	Case management does not directly interact with Classification or Programs in OMIS. As such, when an Offender completes a Program or is Reclassified to a different custody level, there is no automatic update or feed into the case plan. This results in rework and manual entry for the Case Managers who already maintain a high volume of cases.
Classification	
22	DOC staff manually enter information from OMIS into the Classification Form, requiring staff to toggle back and forth between the two and overall adding time to the Classification process and increasing the likelihood of manual data entry errors.
23	Because the Classification Form is not connected to OMIS, DOC staff must use hardcopy forms to obtain signatures from both staff and the Offender and then scan and upload the

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	Classification Form into OMIS. This adds significant effort for the Classification Office, especially if there are edits, overrides, or appeals to the original Classification Form (and thus requiring another round of signatures, scanning, and uploading to OMIS).
24	Classification Office staff must assign an Offender to a labor pool designation to complete the Classification process in OMIS, even if it is not applicable. This may require future rework to reassign an Offender to a labor pool designation.
Community Supervision	
25	Paperwork from the Courts is not consistent.
26	Navigating OMIS is cumbersome.
27	Requests for secure placement is a paper process.
28	Offender self-reporting is not available in OMIS.
29	Pro se activities require the Court to notify Probation and Parole, instead of the court system automatically transferring this information to the MT DOC electronically via an interface between the court system and the MT DOC's OMS.
30	Releasing an Offender from Community Supervision requires navigating through several modules to document the release.
Discipline	
31	Each Unit maintains a paper-based Warning Log that is not documented in OMIS. Further, DOC staff do not record not guilty rulings or "Immediate Corrective Actions" in OMIS. As such, when the Disciplinary Office is evaluating evidence for a major infraction case, it does not have access to a history of lower infractions or repeated behavioral challenges and may deliver a sentence that is not fully informed. This can also cause misunderstandings between Unit staff and the Disciplinary Office when the Unit believes an Offender to be more deserving of a restrictive sanction due to witnessing repeat minor offenses that are not formally documented.
32	Infractions are entered into OMIS only after following a guilty ruling (both major and minor). First, this means that not guilty rulings are not entered OMIS and thus have no electronic record for other staff members to review. Second, this is a paper-based process until the Disciplinary Office receives all hardcopy paperwork (such as the Infraction Report, associated evidence, and the Notice of Hearing form with the guilty ruling) and can enter the information into OMIS. This creates information silos and staff must manually track disciplinary hearings as it is not yet registered in OMIS.
33	Hearing schedules are tracked on an Excel spreadsheet (via Call-Out Sheet or Movement Sheet) and circulated via email the day prior. This requires each Unit to manually note and track an Offender's movement for the day (via the physical board located in each Unit).
34	Discipline Office staff must scan and upload documents to OMIS (sometimes the same documents) depending on the level of the appeal process, requiring rework and more time to process.
35	Discipline Office creates and sends paper copies of discipline paperwork to the Unit to serve an Offender. This manual process requires more staff time to physically transfer the documents and then scan and upload documents to OMIS (sometimes multiple times depending on the appeal process), as opposed to accessing the documents electronically in real-time and obtaining electronic signatures—fully eliminating the need for paper copies.

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36	There is currently no ability for disciplinary sanctions to interface with other systems. For instance, if an Offender is required to pay a fine, this information is manually conveyed to Accounting rather than automatically feeding into RevQ.
Gang Management (Security Threat Groups)	
37	There is no ability to document ex-STG members in OMIS.
38	Access to restricted STG information is not protected in OMIS, posing a security threat to sensitive information.
39	Manual work arounds are needed to document sensitive STG information.
40	OMIS limitations automatically show that an Offender is a “validated” member of an STG instead of a "suspect" prior to validation. This can result in the spread and reporting of inaccurate information.
41	Validation and Scoring Sheet maintained outside of OMIS.
42	Parole Board can access STG restricted notes.
43	STG assessments are paper-based.
Grievances	
44	Informal grievances are currently not logged in OMIS and the DOC does not maintain information on the type, amount, or frequency of informal grievances. This data could be used to address certain reoccurring issues before escalating to a formal grievance (thus requiring less staff time to read and respond to a formal grievance).
45	The Grievance Module is only able to upload one document. This requires more time for Grievance Office staff to re-scan, delete, and re-upload grievance documents depending on the hierarchy of the appeals process.
46	The Grievance Office must respond to a grievance within a given timeframe. Currently, OMIS does not accurately identify the grievance response due date, requiring manual entry and thus increasing the margin of error; nor is there an automated time-based workflow that alerts Officers about deadlines.
47	There is no ability to track the status of a grievance in OMIS and thus staff is manually tracking it on an Excel spreadsheet. This requires more time and staff attention to confirm a grievance has been sent to the appropriate party (such as an AW or Warden) rather than a real-time, automated feedback loop. For instance, the grievance can be electronically delivered to the designated reviewer and sent back to the Grievance Office when the review is complete.
Incident Management	
48	Incidents are not tracked by location or type in OMIS. As such, there is no ability to automatically run a report based on incident data to address reoccurring incidents and respond with corrective action accordingly.
49	Incident Reports are not "closed" or "cleared." For example, if a tool is missing, DOC staff file an Incident Report. When the tool is found, DOC staff file an additional Incident Report. These two reports are not linked, thus creating numerous disparate reports that are linked to the same incident. Subsequently, the DOC is missing out on data collection that could 1) provide a more complete picture of an incident and 2) more thoroughly collect incident metrics that could lead to informed decision-making.

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50	Staff-on-staff instances are documented in OMIS instead of employee management software. This poses a risk that DOC staff might have access to a colleague's sensitive information that would be more appropriate to include in a Human Resources system.
MT DOC Commits / Contracted Community Corrections	
51	A screening module for Offender placement is not in OMIS.
52	DOC staff must manually report to the Court, requiring more staff time and effort.
53	Unit capacity is communicated through email and not updated in real-time.
54	Offender transportation is communicated through email.
Offender Payroll	
55	There is no ability to document Offender Payroll in OMIS and thus staff must do so manually, requiring substantial time and effort. For MWP, this process generally takes 2-3 days, while at MSP it can take 4-5 days.
56	Offender Payroll timesheets can be difficult to read due to illegible handwriting and oftentimes contain errors. This increases the margin of error and requires more staff time to confirm the correct information.
57	There is no automated way to track supplemental payrolls if staff submit timesheets too late.
Offender Records Management	
58	Files are tracked using a barcode that is restricted to a standalone computer, not integrated with OMIS.
59	Warrants and Detainer documents are emailed or faxed between agencies, not electronically generated and transmitted from OMIS.
PREA	
60	There is no annotation in OMIS for Offenders who receive PREA training. This is important because PREA training and acknowledgment of the training is a statuary requirement and staff must manually track and report on this information.
61	There is no ability to record unannounced PREA inspections in OMIS, which can make accurate reporting difficult.
Programs	
62	There is no ability to maintain program waitlists, program curriculum, instructors, schedule, or program attendance in OMIS. This is a substantial barrier in managing not only the logistics of program delivery but also in evaluating a program's efficacy. Currently, staff must maintain this information on Excel spreadsheets.
63	When maintaining program waitlists and admission, staff must manually determine the priority for an Offender's participation in a program. An Offender may be given priority if it is a court-ordered program. As such, determining so requires more time and effort from DOC staff.
64	Currently, there is no consistency across the DOC in defining program completion, including whether successful completion based on an Offender's attendance, or to by to by being active participants? Defining these perimeter parameters adopting it athermancy-wide can provide DOC with metrics around program efficacy and success rates.

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65	Program completions are not automatically shared with Classification Office. As such, the onus is on one of the Case Managers to update OMIS and/or notify the Classification Office of an Offender's progress in his or her case plan, which could ultimately inform the Reclassification process.
Property	
66	A Property Module does not exist in OMIS and thus DOC staff must manually track Offender property on a spreadsheet. In addition to being tedious, there is no interface with Canteen and Commissary and thus no ability to track what property belongs to which Offender. As a result, Unit staff cannot accurately identify if a property item rightfully belongs to an Offender or if it was required by unallowable means.
Reception and Commitment	
67	Upon arrival to an institution, an Offender completes and signs paper forms during initial Intake. Intake staff must then distribute the paperwork to the appropriate recipients. This takes more staff time and effort as opposed to electronic signatures and automatic transfer of completed forms. Further, rework may be required as staff scan and upload certain forms into OMIS.
68	There is no integration between AFIS and OMIS and thus Intake staff are required manually reenter data from OMIS into AFIS.
69	The ID printer has trouble integrating with OMIS and can, at times, require multiple rounds of rebooting. This can delay an already lengthy Intake process when there are numerous Offenders waiting to be processed and limited staff available to do so.
70	There is no integration between the camera and OMIS. Intake staff must manually upload headshots and identifying photos (tattoos, scars, etc.) from the desktop into OMIS, requiring more time.
71	Cell compatibility checks in OMIS can only compare two Offenders at once. Because there are often six or more Offenders in a cell, staff must run multiple compatibility checks, requiring more time and effort.
72	Similarly, cell compatibility checks in OMIS do not take PREA vulnerability into consideration as a feature. Thus, DOC staff must manually reconfigure bed assignments based on PREA designations, adding more time and complexity to the process.
73	Intake staff can only check one demographic for Native / Indigenous populations. This is challenging for someone with multiple tribal affiliations and can result in inaccurate demographic tracking and reporting.
74	Officers at MWP are unable to see pregnancy or post-partum status during Intake due to HIPAA protections. While this is protected health data, there are also implications for accommodation requirements that Officers may be unknowingly violating.
75	DOC policy requires that an Offender attend orientation. Currently, there is no record keeping ability in OMIS to denote who attended orientation and when. Thus, DOC staff must do so manually and physically store an attendance record.
Release and Discharge	
76	Currently in OMIS, flags on Offender's records do not always capture all items that warrant a flag. Thus, DOC staff must manually read Chrono notes to determine if there are flags, and if so, must determine the necessity that an Offender registers as a particular type of Offender. This process can be cumbersome and time consuming.

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77	When releasing an Offender from OMIS, it requires multiple clicks and is tedious for DOC staff.
Restitution and Supervision Fee Collection	
78	Joint & Several accounts requires manual entry/adjustments in Cactus.
79	There is currently no data exchange between OMIS and Cactus, RevQ, PayZang, and Sabhrs systems. This means that disparate information requires staff time and effort to manually exchange information.
80	Probation and Parole Officers do not have access to RevQ, requiring time and effort to manually contact the Central Collections Team to inquire about balance information.
81	There is an error in the data exchange transmitting files from RevQ and OMIS, rendering that exchange as unreliable.
82	There is no method for proactively managing undisbursed collections (due to lack of victim address); resulting in compiling collections that may go to State's unclaimed property.
83	DOC staff must search in multiple places for redundant fee information, resulting in possible omissions related to fees.
Scheduling	
84	There is currently no Scheduling Module in OMIS. Thus, scheduling an Offender's daily movements and activities is a manual process tracked across several spreadsheets. This requires significant staff coordination across the institution with a higher risk of losing track of an Offender's whereabouts, especially when there are delays to circulating the information.
85	OMIS allows for Open Movement of some Offenders which can cause difficulties and delays in locating an Offender.
86	Offender appointments and activities are emailed to the Count Office.
87	Due to the manual processes, an Offender can be scheduled to be at multiple locations at one time. Thus, it takes DOC staff time to manually determine which activity takes priority.
88	Scheduling Offender transport to medical appointments is based on DOC staff availability. Further, due to capacity, some medical appointments are scheduled up to six months out. If there is no transportation available, an Offender may miss an appointment and have to wait an additional six months for the next appointment. This results in not providing care in adequate time and may lead to an increase in grievances.
89	The DOC's EHR System is not integrated with OMIS. This requires medical staff to manually notify institution staff of upcoming medical appointments.
Security, Housing, and Bed Management	
90	Each Unit has a physical board depicting bed assignments. The Classification Office maintains a similar physical board, and the two must manually communicate (generally via phone) to confirm both boards are correct. This takes significant coordination as opposed to electronic assignment updated in real-time in OMIS.
91	Similarly, OMIS does not have the ability to electronically track bed waitlist or bed holds and staff must do so on an Excel spreadsheet. Miscommunications can arise when the Classification Office sees an "open" bed in a Unit while the Unit knows the bed is only temporarily open until the Offender returns. As such, the Classification Office must manually communicate on bed status with each Unit via a phone call or email.

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92	The Unit does not have the ability to update bed assignments in OMIS and must communicate any changes to the Classification Office, who then updates OMIS. This can take more time and may result in OMIS displaying incorrect bed assignments until the Classification Office can implement the change.
93	In addition to the physical board, the Unit relies on a paper logbook to track an Offender's departure from and arrival back to the Unit. When an Offender arrives at the intended destination, receiving staff may or may not communicate he arrived in the Unit. This can be challenging during counts, requiring Unit staff to manually call around attempting to locate an Offender's whereabouts.
94	There is no ability to electronically track an Offender's movement from MSP's high-side to low-side (and vice versa) in OMIS, possibly resulting in incorrect placement or management of the Offender once they arrive at the low-side Unit.
95	When an Offender receives a new bed assignment, he or she must review and sign a paper Cell Check Form denoting the condition of the cell and any existing damage. This hardcopy form is filed and not uploaded to OMIS, requiring staff to manually retrieve it when necessary.
Sentence and Time Accounting	
96	District Courts do not send sentencing information in a consistent format. When they do, it is received manually requiring interpretation and manual data entry by MT DOC staff.
97	Official sentencing is orally pronounced in Court. This requires a MT DOC representative to physically be in the Courtroom to hear the sentence and relay that to Records for inclusion in OMIS.
98	An Offender's earliest release date is manually calculated, possibly resulting in manual data entry and inaccurate release dates.
Trust Accounting	
99	Trust accounting functionality is not in OMIS.
100	Access to trust accounting software requires reconciling profile information with a separate system (OKTA).
101	Payroll is manually processed in the Cactus system.
102	Canteen purchases are manually entered using dummy accounts in Cactus for the Treatment facilities.
103	Multiple manual steps are required for reconciliation and deposit activities.
104	Unable to know if an Offender has insufficient funds when they make a canteen purchase.
105	Obligation information is documented as Chronos notes.
106	Manual data entry is required for OMIS, Cactus, RevQ.
107	Deposits to Offender's Trust Account is inconsistent. There is a delay from the date of transaction to when the funds are available.
108	Manual entries are required for every payroll transaction for each Offender.
109	Identifying indigent Offenders is a manual process.
Victim Support Management	

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110	Victim Services can provide services prior to a Court's guilty ruling. Thus, a perceived Offender will not be in OMIS until found guilty of a felony. This means that Victim Services must store information on a local drive (sometimes for up to a year) until an Offender is created in OMIS, at which point they may associate the Offender and victim(s).
111	Victim Services does not track any of its five programs in OMIS. Therefore, there is no ability to track programmatic data (such as attendance, completion, etc.) to determine program efficacy.
112	When an "event" is updated in OMIS (such as a Sentence Review Hearing Date), Victim Services staff must manually search for the Offender in VINE, identify his or her victims, and manually contact all victims in the manner in which they have requested. This requires substantial staff time as compared to an automatic process with a future OMS/VINE interface. This is especially important as informing victims is a statutory obligation and thus staff must do so in addition to managing large case volumes.
113	Victim Services may work with an Offender who is also a victim. Currently, there is no way to document this in OMIS. This may result in inaccurate data and incomplete data in OMIS, possibly resulting in incorrect placement in programs and housing.
Visitation	
114	Visitation is not documented in OMIS. All communication about visitation activities is conducted through email.
Vocational and General Education	
115	Vocational and General Education documentation requires manual documentation that is stored in several different locations.