

## Specialty License Plate and Voluntary Contributions Sales and Distributions Data

July 12, 2016

Advisory Memorandum 201516-37

The purpose of this engagement was to report on the accessibility and availability of certain data related to specialty license plates (SLP) and voluntary contributions (VC).

SLP are license plates available to the general public with unique designs that promote philanthropic and other causes and require payment of an additional annual use fee. VC of specified minimum amounts to various organizations for philanthropic and other causes are permitted during the application for:

- An original, renewal, or replacement driver license or identification card
- A motor vehicle registration or renewal of registration

Florida Statutes (F.S.), designate the organizations which receive the fees and contributions. The primary relevant laws are noted below:

Type	F.S.
SLP	320.08053, 320.08056, 320.08058, 320.08062
VC – Motor Vehicles	320.02, 320.023
VC – Drivers Licenses	322.08, 322.081

Note: All SLP and VC funds are classified as state financial assistance. Therefore, Section 215.97, F.S., applies to all SLP and VC funds, regardless of the amount of revenue or expenditure. The audit provision in Section 215.97(2)(a), F.S., is only applicable if the expenditures of state financial assistance from all sources exceed \$750,000 in the entity's fiscal year. The audit threshold was revised with an effective date of July 1, 2016.

The Division of Motorist Services, Bureau of Issuance Oversight (Bureau) is responsible for administrating various activities, functions, and processes related to the SLP and VC programs. SLP sales or renewals and VC are recorded and reported in various systems. Currently, SLP and VC data generated by the various systems is available to the organizations from three webpages:

**Division of Motorist Services** – The Specialty License Plate website includes a page for “Specialty License Plate Sales” which allows organizations (or any user) to make queries by SLP or county using two reports:

- Monthly Active Specialty Plates
- Monthly Revenue Collections Report

**Bureau of Accounting** – The “Revenue Distribution Payment Report” is a webpage which allows the organization and Department to inquire by FEID (Federal Employer Identification) number and a single date for SLP and VC distribution data.

**Florida Department of Financial Services** – The Florida Chief Financial Officer maintains certain vendor/payee payments information. Organizations (or any user) may inquire by vendor number, date ranges, paying state agency, etc., for SLP and VC.

Each source includes some unique and useful information not available in the other sources, including:

**Division of Motorist Services webpage** – The data source is the Florida Real-Time Vehicle Information System (FRVIS) which serves as an interface to exchange information between the Tax Collectors and the Department. This report includes the location (by county) of SLP sales.

**Bureau of Accounting webpage** – The data source is FRVIS complemented by data from the Bureau of Accounting. It specifies the:

- Revenue Type, i.e., SLP, VC – Motor Vehicles, and VC – Drivers Licenses. This allows the organization to accurately classify the revenue source. By properly identifying the revenue source, the accuracy of the organization's annual financial reporting is improved. Separate classifications also enhance the likelihood of identifying relevant restrictions on the use of funds to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Number. The CSFA number allows the organizations to:
  - Make Board members and key staff aware of the receipt of state financial assistance, and the associated responsibilities, including but not limited to, records retention and access to records by various accountability groups.
  - Inform subrecipients of certain requirements pursuant to Section 215.97(7), F.S. This notification is required regardless of the amount of the grant, award, agreement, etc.
  - Determine if a single audit or project specific audit is required. By accumulating the CSFA numbers for all state projects, including SLP/VC, the organization can calculate its annual expenditure of all state financial assistance. Additionally, providing the CSFA number to its certified public accountant is helpful for financial reporting purposes.

**Florida Department of Financial Services (FDFS)** – The data source is the payment information provided by the Department and processed by the FDFS. The payment date approximates the date of deposit. The amount shown on this screen will correlate to the amounts deposited in the organization's account, or the amount of the warrant (check).

## Conclusion

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Our review of the accessibility and availability of the SLP and VC data indicated that enhancements could be made. Revising the presentation of the data sources to one webpage will:

- Improve the organizations' access to useful data for operational, marketing, budgeting, accounting, and reporting purposes.
- Improve the timeliness of obtaining data.
- Decrease the number of inquiries to Bureau staff for routine data thereby allowing Bureau staff to focus on monitoring, technical assistance, and training.

We recommend all three sources, or the relevant links, be located on the Division of Motorist Services' webpage to enhance access and query abilities to the organizations. Additionally, a brief description of the use (and limitations) of the data source should be included on the webpage. Further, to ensure widespread notification and understanding of the availability of the tools on the revised webpage, the Bureau should:

- Communicate the data and query options, by email, with all organizations and request a confirmation receipt from each organization.
- Explain the data and query options at periodic workshops.
- Ensure Bureau staff are familiar with the various data sources and queries, and develop a process for periodic review of the webpage.
- Consult with the Bureau of Accounting to facilitate the presentation and explanation of the data sources.

In addition, the Bureau of Accounting should consider modifying the "Revenue Distribution Payment Report" to allow for a range of distribution dates to provide improved periodic financial reporting for the organizations.

## Distribution, Statement of Accordance, and Project Team

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### Distribution

Terry L. Rhodes, Executive Director  
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Steve Burch, Chief of Accounting  
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### Statement of Accordance

Section 20.055, F.S., requires the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' Inspector General to review, evaluate, and report on policies, plans, procedures, accounting, financial, and other operations of the Department and to recommend improvements.

### Project Team

Engagement conducted by:  
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Approved by:

  
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