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July 15, 2011

The Honorable Rick Murphy, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Carl Seel, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Murphy and Representative Seel:

Our Office has recently completed a 42-month followup of the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)—Juvenile Treatment Programs, regarding the implementation status of the 18 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in December 2007 (Auditor General Report No. 07-13). As the attached grid indicates:

- 4 have been implemented;
- 10 are in the process of being implemented;
- 1 is not yet applicable; and
- 3 have not been implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this concludes our follow-up work on the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations from the December 2007 performance audit report.

Sincerely,

Dale Chapman, Director
Performance Audit Division

DC:ss
Attachment

CC: David K. Byers, Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

**ARIZONA SUPREME COURT,
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS—
JUVENILE TREATMENT PROGRAMS
Auditor General Report No. 07-13
42-Month Follow-Up Report**

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

Finding 1: Supreme Court should improve assessment, planning, and monitoring processes

<p>1.1 The AOC should seek the Arizona Judicial Council's direction regarding the need to develop and implement policies and procedures related to the risk and strengths/protective factors assessments, case planning, and monitoring the delivery of treatment services to juveniles, as necessary.</p>	<p>Implemented at 6 months</p>
<p>1.2 If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop and implement policies and procedures, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to develop policies and procedures regarding the completion of the risk assessment. These policies and procedures should:</p> <p>a. Prescribe the time frame for completing this assessment and allow for instances to potentially complete one risk assessment if multiple referrals occur within a specified time frame;</p> <p>b. Recommend how a juvenile's risk assessment should be used to determine an appropriate level of supervision for juveniles on probation and if the juvenile should receive more aggressive treatment services; and</p> <p>c. Determine whether the juvenile should receive needs and/or strengths/protective factors assessments based on the juvenile's risk assessment.</p>	<p>Implementation in process Although the AOC has drafted policies and procedures for the risk-assessment tool, it plans to modify these policies and procedures to be compatible with a new needs-assessment tool that it is adopting from the Ohio Department of Youth Services (see explanation for Recommendation 1.3 for details about the new needs assessment).</p> <p>Not implemented The draft policies and procedures do not address how the risk assessment should be used to determine the level of supervision and the need for more aggressive treatment services. An AOC official said that the AOC will rely on the county juvenile courts to use evidence-based practices to determine how to best use the risk-assessment results.</p> <p>Not implemented The draft policies and procedures do not address how to determine whether the juvenile should receive needs and/or strengths assessments. An AOC official said that the AOC will rely on the county juvenile courts to determine how to best use the risk-assessment results.</p>

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

- 1.3 The AOC should continue its efforts to evaluate and revise its needs assessment to better meet best practices and to provide a useful, easy tool for probation officers.

Implementation in process

The AOC is in the process of adopting a needs-assessment tool used by the Ohio Department of Youth Services. In May 2011, the AOC entered into a contract with the University of Cincinnati to acquire a needs-assessment tool used in Ohio and to customize it for Arizona. Although the AOC had begun developing its own needs-assessment tool and piloted it in 2010, AOC officials found that this assessment needed further enhancements and reported a lack of resources to make it fully functional on their computer systems. AOC officials reported that they became aware of the Ohio needs-assessment tool and determined that it was more comprehensive than the needs-assessment tool it was developing and addressed this tool's deficiencies. For example, the Ohio tool included more topic areas, a built-in strengths assessment, and a built-in case planning tool. Further, the Ohio tool was fully functional on computer systems in Ohio, and the AOC expects that it will quickly become functional on the AOC's computer systems. The AOC is in the process of customizing the Ohio tool for its use.

AOC officials reported that they will still use their own risk assessment for all juveniles referred to the juvenile justice system and use the Ohio needs-assessment tool for all juveniles who have been found responsible for an illegal action by a juvenile court. The AOC reported that it plans to revise its draft policies and procedures for risk assessments, needs/strengths assessments, case planning, and the monitoring of the delivery of treatment services to ensure they are consistent with the Ohio needs-assessment tool. The AOC further reported that it plans to fully implement the new needs assessment state-wide and finalize related policies and procedures by December 2011.

- 1.4 If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to evaluate the approach for assessing strengths/protective factors, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to ensure this approach is consistent with best practices and establish policy requiring the completion of a strengths/protective factors assessment.

Implementation in process

See explanation for Recommendation 1.3.

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

1.5 If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop and implement policies and procedures guiding the creation of case plans for juveniles, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to develop and implement such policies and procedures for case plans that are consistent with best practices. These policies and procedures should require that case plans:

a. Address prioritized needs as identified in the risk and needs assessments;

Implementation in process

The case-planning feature included in the Ohio needs-assessment tool, which is discussed in the explanation for Recommendation 1.3, essentially has the functionality to allow the county juvenile courts to implement Recommendations 1.5a through 1.5d. The AOC reported that the case-planning feature in the Ohio needs assessment will be optional for counties to use, and it will be a starting point to develop a standardized state-wide case plan format that can be individualized for each juvenile and that will be required to be completed within a certain time frame.

b. Include action steps for reaching defined goals and objectives;

Implementation in process

See explanation for Recommendation 1.5a.

c. Use target dates for action steps, goals and objectives, and completion of services; and

Implementation in process

See explanation for Recommendation 1.5a.

d. Receive regular supervisory review.

Implementation in process

See explanation for Recommendation 1.5a.

1.6 If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to define an appropriate time frame for completing a case plan, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to define an appropriate case plan completion time frame.

Implementation in process

See explanation for Recommendation 1.5a.

1.7 If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop policies and procedures regarding monitoring the delivery of treatment services to juveniles, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to establish policies and procedures that:

a. Direct juvenile probation officers to monitor the delivery of treatment services received by juveniles, regardless of the funding source, to help ensure treatment services are addressing a juvenile's needs; and

Not implemented

The AOC reported that it wants to fully implement its new needs-assessment tool before developing policies and procedures regarding the monitoring of treatment service delivery.

Recommendation**Status/Additional Explanation**

- b. Require county juvenile courts to periodically reassess a juvenile's risk and needs, and adjust case plans as needed.

Implementation in process

Although AOC draft policies and procedures require county juvenile courts to reassess a juvenile's risk and needs, time frames for these reassessments and a requirement to adjust case plans are not included in the draft policies and procedures. According to AOC officials, the AOC will finalize these policies and procedures after it implements the new needs-assessment tool.

- 1.8 Once the various policies and procedures recommended in this audit report are developed, the AOC should submit these policies and procedures to the Arizona Judicial Council for its review and approval.

Not yet applicable

The AOC has completed draft policies and procedures for its risk-assessment and needs-assessment tools. After it implements the new needs-assessment tool, the AOC reported that it will make necessary revisions to and finalize these policies and procedures. Once finalized, the AOC will submit the policies and procedures to the Arizona Judicial Council for its review and approval.

- 1.9 The AOC should conduct a sufficient level of analysis during its county juvenile court Operational Reviews to determine whether assessments are conducted within the required time frames. It should also expand the reviews to include a review of county compliance with the additional policies, procedures, and practices recommended in this report once they have been implemented.

Implementation in process

The AOC has developed a report that will track county juvenile court compliance with risk-assessment and needs-assessment completion time frames. According to AOC officials, it will begin to use this report to track these time frames when it finalizes and implements the needs-assessment policies and procedures. Additionally, because it has not yet finalized risk-assessment and needs-assessment policies and procedures, the AOC reported that it has not yet expanded operational reviews to include a review of county juvenile court compliance with these policies and procedures.

Finding 2: Contracting process thorough, but AOC should improve monitoring of treatment services vendors

- 2.1 The AOC should fully implement its plan to improve its self-audit process by requesting and reviewing a sample of case files with completed vendor forms to ensure vendor contract compliance.

Implemented at 6 months

- 2.2 The AOC should modify its vendor sampling approach to conduct annual monitoring site visits for a sample of its smaller vendors.

Implemented at 18 months

- 2.3 The AOC should finalize, implement, and follow its policies for the timely review and approval of vendor corrective action plans.

Implemented at 18 months