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July 3, 2019

The Honorable Rick Gray, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Anthony Kern, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Gray and Representative Kern:

Our Office has recently completed an 18-month followup of the Arizona Department of Child Safety—Staff Retention, Recruitment, and Training regarding the implementation status of the 16 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the special report released in September 2017 (Auditor General Report 17-111). As the attached grid indicates:

- 6 have been implemented.
- 1 has been partially implemented.
- 4 are in the process of being implemented.
- 5 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 September 2017 performance audit report.

Sincerely,
Dale Chapman, Director
Performance Audit Division

cc: Gregory McKay, Director
Arizona Department of Child Safety

Arizona Department of Child Safety—Staff Retention, Recruitment, and Training Auditor General Report 17-111 18-Month Follow-Up Report

Recommendation	Status/Additional Explanation
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Chapter 1: Department has experienced turnover

<p>1.1 The Department should consider implementing a quality control check to help ensure the consistency of turnover information across its reports.</p>	<p>Not implemented As indicated in its response to the report, the Department did not agree that additional quality control checks were necessary.</p>
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Chapter 2: Department taking various actions to improve staff retention

<p>2.1 The Department should continue to explore opportunities to address salary concerns as resources permit. In doing so, it should consider gathering additional state salary information from other states for benchmarking, as it deems necessary.</p>	<p>Implemented at 18 months</p>
<p>2.2 The Department should carry out its plans to implement a peer support program to support staff facing trauma and burnout.</p>	<p>Implemented at 6 months</p>

Chapter 3: Department can further enhance its efforts to hire best fit job applicants to promote retention

<p>3.1 The Department should take additional actions to recruit caseworker applicants with backgrounds in social work or related fields by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revising its minimum caseworker qualifications to at least include a preference for applicants with a social work or related degree and/or previous child welfare experience. The Department should then prioritize its recruitment and hiring of applicants in accordance with this preference. 	<p>Partially implemented at 18 months The Department revised its job announcement to include a preference for candidates who possess training, education, and/or experience in social work. It is unclear whether the Department has prioritized its recruitment efforts in accordance with this preference because many factors may be considered in offering employment. According to the Department, 44 of the 201 caseworker applicants interviewed between January and March 2019 had a social work degree and/or related experience. The Department reported that it hired 11 of the applicants with a social work degree and/or related experience.</p>
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Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

- b. As resources allow, participating in additional recruiting activities at the universities to recruit applicants earning social work or related degrees who are not part of the tuition assistance program. As needed and as resources permit, the Department could also consider attending recruiting activities at universities in bordering states, such as Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah, to recruit caseworker applicants for rural Arizona cities.

Not implemented

As indicated in its response to the report, the Department does not plan to implement this recommendation.

- 3.2 The Department should enhance the use of its RJP video to further encourage applicants to watch and reflect on the video and help it assess applicants' job fit. For example, the Department could inform applicants that they will be asked questions about the video in the interview and then ask questions based on the video that help the Department assess the applicants' job fit.

Implemented at 18 months

- 3.3 As the Department continues its efforts to improve its caseworker applicant assessment tools, it should revise or implement additional assessment tools that would help better assess applicants' observational skills and planning and organizing work skills. The Department should also consider whether there would be benefit in taking a similar approach in its assessment of program supervisor applicants.

Implementation in process

The Department revised its caseworker interview questions and written assessment in December 2017 to help assess applicant's key competencies, including observational skills and planning and organizing work skills. The Department is also developing a standardized recruitment process for program supervisors that includes completing mandatory training before an applicant can apply for a supervisor position, revising the interview process, and creating scenario-based questions related to competencies. The Department reported that it plans to finish developing the new process in calendar year 2019.

- 3.4 The Department should ensure that, when possible, program supervisors participate in the interview for caseworker applicants for positions in their units.

Implemented at 6 months

Chapter 4: Department now monitors compliance with tuition assistance program requirements and should evaluate the program

- 4.1 The Department should continue to implement its new processes for monitoring participants' compliance with its tuition assistance program and collecting repayment from participants who do not meet their employment obligations.

Implemented at 6 months

- 4.2 Consistent with federal requirements, the Department should evaluate its tuition assistance program beyond monitoring participants' compliance with employment obligations for internal management purposes.

Implementation in process

The Department reported that it is working with Arizona State University (ASU) to develop a tuition-assistance-program study that would evaluate program effectiveness and track program graduate outcomes. The Department provided an outline of the proposed study but does not have an estimated date for conducting the study.

Chapter 5: Department should expand current efforts to strengthen child welfare staff training

5.1 The Department should continue its efforts to address the issues it identified regarding the consistency and quality of support provided to caseworker trainees. It should also monitor and assess whether its efforts result in improved support for trainees and, if not, identify and take additional steps to improve trainee support, as needed.	Implementation in process The Department has continued its efforts to address the consistency and quality of support provided to caseworker trainees. For example, the Department has developed and implemented activity guides that require trainees to complete specific tasks that include shadowing and discussing experiences with supervisors or seasoned caseworkers. In addition, the Department has developed processes for ensuring trainees complete required training and demonstrate proficiency in specific skills before being promoted to a full-time caseworker. The Department reported that, because of the recency of these efforts, it has not yet assessed whether its efforts have resulted in improved trainee support.
5.2 The Department should carry out its plans to revise its core supervisor training. As part of this effort, the Department should (1) incorporate mentoring into the supervisor core training and (2) increase opportunities for supervisors to interact with one another.	Implementation in process The Department has begun planning for the development of a new recruiting, onboarding, and training program for new supervisors. This program will include the use of supervision coaches, who will be responsible for providing ongoing support, training, and development to supervisors and program managers. According to the Department, it plans to start using supervision coaches during the first quarter of fiscal year 2020.
5.3 The Department should develop a formal training program for its program managers that includes mentoring and networking opportunities.	Not implemented The Department reported that it has not yet begun implementing this recommendation because it has prioritized Recommendation 5.2 for implementation, which includes a training program for aspiring and first-time leaders. The Department reported that this training program will lay the groundwork for developing a training program for its program managers.
5.4 Consistent with federal requirements, the Department should develop and implement a continuous training requirement and document this requirement in policy. In doing so, the Department should determine the amount of training its staff should complete on an ongoing basis, such as a minimum number of annual training hours, and how to track this training's completion.	Not implemented The Department reported that it does not plan to develop or implement a formal continuous training requirement. However, as was the case during the audit, the Department provides ongoing training opportunities for staff and can track training completion using its Learning Management System.

Recommendation

Status/Additional Explanation

5.5 The Department should identify and implement additional accountability mechanisms that ensure (1) staff responsible for tracking and monitoring training completion do so in accordance with department processes and (2) all staff comply with the Department's training requirements for their positions.

Not implemented

As indicated in its response to the report, the Department did not agree that it was necessary to identify and implement additional accountability mechanisms to ensure staff complete their required training. The Department reported that its current process, which was in place during the audit, allows for supervisors, managers, and administrative staff to access its Learning Management System to review whether staff are completing required trainings. The Department revised its attendance and leave policy in March 2019 to reaffirm that supervisors should ensure employees attend and document mandatory trainings through its Learning Management System. However, we reviewed the completed training for 10 caseworkers and found that none of the staff had completed all required training within the Department's designated time frames.

5.6 The Department should continue to develop and implement its training evaluation processes, such as the quarterly and annual training reviews and training audits. It should also continue to identify and assess opportunities for further developing its training evaluation efforts.

Implemented at 18 months