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OFFICE OF THE  
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May 24, 2016

The Honorable John Allen, Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Judy Burges, Vice Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Representative Allen and Senator Burges:

Our Office has recently completed an initial followup of the *Arizona Foster Care Review Board* regarding the implementation status of the 11 audit recommendations presented in the performance audit report released in September 2015 (Auditor General Report No. 15-110). As the attached grid indicates:

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

Our Office will conduct an 18-month followup with the Arizona Foster Care Review Board on the status of those recommendations that have not yet been fully implemented.

Sincerely,

Dale Chapman, Director  
Performance Audit Division

DC:ka  
Attachment

cc: David Byers, Administrative Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

Caroline Lutt-Owens, Director  
AOC, Dependent Children's Services Division

# Arizona Foster Care Review Board

## Auditor General Report No. 15-110

### Initial Follow-Up Report

#### Recommendation

#### Status/Additional Explanation

#### Finding 1: FCRB should evaluate and enhance its board member recruitment strategies

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| 1. The FCRB should evaluate the adequacy of its recruitment strategies and identify and implement new recruitment strategies, as needed, such as continuing to partner with other child welfare stakeholders to recruit board members. | <b>Implementation in process</b><br>The FCRB has continued to explore various ways to recruit board members. For example, the State Board's Outreach Committee developed the "Blanket the State" campaign where board members personally reach out to others in their community and encourage them to volunteer. In addition, the Arizona Supreme Court distributed a news release to various media outlets highlighting the rise in children in foster care and the need for more board members. |
| 2. FCRB staff should better support recruiting efforts by providing more administrative support for the State Board's Outreach Committee.  | <b>Implemented at 6 months</b>  |

#### Finding 2: FCRB should ensure that all reports are submitted to the juvenile court in a timely manner

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| 1. The FCRB's Phoenix office should ensure that it distributes its review reports to the court in a timely manner by developing and implementing a method for tracking and monitoring its report distribution timeliness, as is done in the Tucson office. | <b>Implementation in process</b><br>The FCRB's Phoenix office has added review report due dates to its monthly calendars distributed to program specialists. In addition, program specialists are required to complete a distribution request form when they have completed their reports to allow supervisors to track and follow up on reports. The FCRB also stated that it is working with its information technology (IT) department to develop a more automated report tracking and monitoring tool. |
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#### Finding 3: FCRB should continue working with DCS to improve caseworker attendance at board reviews

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|--|---|
| 1. To improve the value of review reports to the juvenile court, the FCRB should continue to collaborate with the DCS to assess the reason that caseworkers do not attend board reviews and develop and implement strategies to improve caseworker attendance.                         | <b>Implementation in process</b><br>The FCRB reported that it has continued its collaboration with the DCS to identify ways to improve caseworker attendance at board reviews. For example, the FCRB has begun e-mailing rather than mailing review meeting notices to caseworkers and noting any documentation, such as case plans, needed from caseworkers. |
| 2. If the FCRB's collaboration with the DCS does not produce effective strategies for improving caseworker attendance, the FCRB should consider, in consultation with the DCS, whether to pursue changes in legislation that would require DCS caseworker attendance at board reviews. | <b>Not yet applicable</b><br>The FCRB reported that it continues to work closely with the DCS to address caseworker attendance at board reviews.  |

**Recommendation****Status/Additional Explanation****Finding 4: FCRB should resume providing child welfare system recommendations and program metrics to stakeholders**

1. The FCRB should develop and implement a process for making recommendations for improving Arizona's child welfare system and for reporting key program metrics to provide stakeholders a broad and independent review of the DCS' permanency efforts.

**Implementation in process**

The FCRB reported that it has begun discussing how to implement this recommendation and working with its IT department to determine what data could be included in an annual report.

**Sunset factor #2: The extent to which the FCRB has met its statutory objective and purpose and the efficiency with which it has operated.**

1. The FCRB should continue to collaborate with the IT department of the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, to develop and implement a secure online system for distributing case information.

**Implementation in process**

The FCRB has been working with its IT department to develop a secure online system for distributing case information. The FCRB has identified four local foster care review boards to pilot the system's implementation.

2. The FCRB should develop and implement policies and procedures for better tracking and monitoring board members' completed training hours to ensure board members are staying current on child welfare issues and practices.

**Implemented at 6 months**

3. FCRB management should take a more active role in overseeing the work performed by the State Board and its committees, such as following up on previously identified action items, to ensure the State Board and its committees effectively perform their duties.

**Implemented at 6 months**

4. The FCRB should continue to assess the State Board's size and consider pursuing statutory changes to reduce its size, as appropriate.

**Implemented at 6 months**

Laws 2016, Ch. 134, reduces the size of the State Board from one member for every three local boards to one member for every ten local boards, with no more than six members appointed from any county. The legislation also reduces the number of members appointed by the Arizona Supreme Court from seven to three members.

**Sunset factor #3: The extent to which the FCRB serves the entire State rather than specific interests.**

5. The FCRB should ensure that the information on its Web site is complete and up to date.

**Implementation in process**

The FCRB has updated some, but not all, of the information on its Web site. For example, the FCRB is in the process of updating its "Reports" Web page.