



DEBRA K. DAVENPORT, CPA  
AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA  
OFFICE OF THE  
**AUDITOR GENERAL**

WILLIAM THOMSON  
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

March 29, 2004

The Honorable John Huppenthal, Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Robert Blendu, Vice Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Representative Huppenthal and Senator Blendu:

Our Office has recently completed a 24-month followup of the Department of Economic Security—Homeless Youth Intervention Program regarding the implementation status of the 11 recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the evaluation report released in November 2001 (Auditor General Report No. 01-32). As the attached grid indicates:

- 8 of the 11 recommendations have been implemented; and
- 3 of the 11 recommendations are not implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this report concludes our follow-up work on the Department of Economic Security's efforts to implement the recommendations resulting from the November 2001 Program Evaluation.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport  
Auditor General

Attachment

cc: Mr. David A. Berns, Director  
Department of Economic Security

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY**  
**Homeless Youth Intervention Program**  
**24-Month Follow-Up Report To**  
**Auditor General Report No. 01-32**

**FINDING I: Program Should Work To Increase Youths' Focus on Reunification or Self-Sufficiency**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented</b>
<p>1. The program should improve follow-up efforts in order to better determine its impact on the lives of the youths it serves. Specifically, it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Modify intake forms to better ensure youth can be contacted once they leave the program. Such modifications should include the names, addresses, and phone numbers of people who would know where the youth is living.</li> <li>b. Contact youth at 30-, 60-, and 90-day intervals as required.</li> <li>c. Complete all steps of the follow-up process at all sites and sufficiently train all staff to administer the same interview schedule.</li> <li>d. Analyze completed follow-up interviews and include summarized information in the monthly reports to DES.</li> <li>e. Provide additional information to the youth if during the follow-up program staff identify additional concerns or youths are in need of more services.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented at 12 months</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented at 18 months</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented at 24 months</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented at 24 months</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implemented at 24 months</b></p>	

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**Homeless Youth Intervention Program**  
**24-Month Follow-Up Report To**  
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**FINDING I: Program Should Work To Increase Youths' Focus on Reunification or Self-Sufficiency (Concl'd)**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented</b>
2. The program should assist youths in developing service plan goals that address critical behavioral needs identified at assessment.	<b>Not Implemented</b>	Interviews with the program coordinator and caseworkers found that the program continues to emphasize basic needs goals such as housing, employment, and education rather than critical behavioral needs goals.
3. The program should complete family assessments for all youths in the program as required and increase the level of family involvement at the assessment and service plan phases.	<b>Implemented at 24 months</b>	

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**FINDING II: DES Should Monitor Program Costs**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status of Implementing Recommendation</b>	<b>Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented</b>
1. DES should monitor program costs and ensure the capitated rates better reflect actual service costs in future contracts.	<b>Not Implemented</b>	DES provided examples of monthly billings that show actual costs, but has not implemented a process for analyzing actual costs and comparing them to the capitated rates.
2. The program should ensure that it categorizes housing costs appropriately.	<b>Implemented at 24 months</b>	
3. The program should monitor housing costs and youths' progress while in shelter care or transitional living.	<b>Implemented at 24 months</b>	

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**FINDING II: DES Should Monitor Program Costs**

<p>4. DES should develop policies, as needed, to limit the number of days a youth can stay in shelter care and the transitional living program based on the youth's progress while in the program.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Not Implemented</p>	<p>Although DES developed a length-of-stay policy for transitional living and shelter care, this policy does not provide a specific number of days or months a youth can stay within the program. Rather, the policy indicates that the program will continue to pay for the youth until a different funding source can be found or the youth exits the program. The policy indicates that its purpose is to allow youth to remain off the street in a safe, stable environment. Further, interviews with program staff found that staff felt that, as long as a youth was making progress on his or her goals, they should be allowed to stay in the program.</p>
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