



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

1717 W. Jefferson, P.O. Box 6123, Phoenix, Arizona 85005

Janet Napolitano
Governor

David A. Berns
Director

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
2910 North 44 Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Dear Ms. Davenport:

The Department of Economic Security is providing the enclosed comments to supplement the Child Protective Services Caseload and Training Audit Report issued by your office in October 2003 as Report No. 03-09. As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, our comments address each of the recommendations in the report.

Under the leadership of Governor Napolitano, we have devoted most of this calendar year to an in-depth statewide study of our Child Protective Services system. Through the outstanding and tireless efforts of community and staff representatives, several major recommendations were made. One of the primary and recurring comments made by committee participants was the need for additional Child Protective Services case managers in Arizona.

The statistical data provided by your office regarding staffing ratios and percentages is appreciated. While we view these staffing estimates as an important evaluative criteria, the focus on the "quality" of the child protective and case management services provided to Arizona's vulnerable children is essential for the safety and well-being of our children. The quality of services provided is directly related to the workload and expectations placed upon our Child Protective Services case managers.

As acknowledged by the Office of the Auditor General, the high rate of staff turnover in Child Protective Services is a substantial barrier to the effective delivery of quality services to Arizona's children and their families. Activities such as the thorough documentation of case notes and other vital case-specific information in our automated case management system is required; however, these functions are many times delayed while the case managers fulfill other required duties and

responsibilities. The ability of supervisors to consistently provide quality case-specific oversight to their case managers is also affected by the staffing shortages, high turnover rate, and supervisor-to-case manager ratios that exceed the standards.

As a result, staff are frustrated, as they do not have sufficient time to provide the level of case management services needed by our children and families. Staff know that in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the children being served, quality and timely case management services must consistently be provided. This requires additional direct service staff.

One of the most frequent comments we receive from our case managers is "... what I need is more time to manage my case....". It is imperative that we view and assess the complexities and responsibilities placed upon Arizona's child protective services case managers when determining the need for additional direct service staff. Arizona's diverse population, multi-cultural communities, and vast rural areas have a direct impact upon the time required by the child protective services case manager for case management services.

We appreciate the time and efforts extended by staff of the Office of the Auditor General in evaluating our levels of direct service staffing; but regret that more emphasis was not placed upon the complexities of the current child maltreatment cases throughout Arizona. We wish the Auditor's Report also focused more on the extraordinary collaborative efforts required by child protective services case managers when investigating report of child maltreatment in many of Arizona's transient communities.

Please feel free to call me at (602) 542-5678 if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

David A. Berns

Enclosure

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY'S RESPONSE TO THE
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES CASELOADS AND TRAINING
October 2003**

The Department of Economic Security (DES) is pleased to provide the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) with the following comments regarding each of the recommendations suggested in the report entitled *Child Protective Services - Caseloads and Training*. This report was issued as Auditor General Report 03-09 in October 2003. In addition, the Department has provided comments prior to the finding responses regarding the Summary and Introduction and Background sections of the report.

Comments to the Summary Section:

Page i:

In addition to not providing sufficient funding to annualize the case manager positions appropriated in FY 2002, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee did not annualize an additional 23 support staff that were appropriated as part of the comprehensive staffing package in FY 2002. These support positions included CPS Unit Supervisors, Human Service Workers and Secretaries. The total number of FTE which the Department did not receive annualization funding for was 104. The appropriations report for FY 2002 indicates that the funding received for these positions was between one-half to three-quarters of the year. The Department's reconciliation of the funding received indicates that the funds received provide for only 70% of the required amount to fully fund these FTE.

Page iii:

The report indicates that there are several indications that CPS case managers are not able to effectively perform their jobs. The Department agrees, and attributes this to high turnover, high stress and high caseloads. In order to allow the CPS case manager to effectively perform their job, the Division has already worked with the Governor's Office to develop a comprehensive first step to alleviating these factors. A request for additional staffing and resources to provide needed services has been developed and will be debated during a special session of the legislature beginning on October 20, 2003. This package addresses retention issues by requesting adequate compensation and resources for staff, additional case management positions (along with support staffing) to reduce caseloads, additional training for case managers and supervisors, and funding for permanency and family services. By providing the case worker with the services needed to assist families, the case worker will not be required to "chase down" a needed service.

Page iv:

The training institute provides case workers with the knowledge and skills which will aid in retention once they have completed the program. The Institute also serves as an important process in assisting new case managers in understanding what being a CPS case manager requires. Many times this understanding provides the new case manager with the realization that they are not cut out to be a CPS worker. By making this determination prior to handling a caseload, the Division is able to provide stability to families by not having a new case worker quit two weeks after becoming the family's case manager. This, in turn, provides continuity of service delivery.

Page v:

The Department agrees that, due to high caseloads and the unit supervisors having to handle a caseload, supervisory oversight may be lacking. The Department believes that, with the requested staffing, the supervisors will not have to handle a caseload and will be able to more effectively manage their units. This will also allow the supervisor more time to provide mentoring to new case managers and review cases for the case managers. This finding seems to be contradictory to indicating that the Division should include unit supervisors as case carrying for the purpose of determining how many staff are needed to handle the caseload. When supervisors carry caseloads it detracts from their supervisory functions.

Comments to the Introduction and Background Section:

Page 5

The report indicates that the Division does not have a comprehensive listing of CPS units. The Division does maintain a listing of all DCYF units in its automated system. While this listing may not have the specific unit function associated with it, the list does comprise all units within the Division.

Page 6

The report indicates that there were cases included in the Division's caseload that were either contained in the stale case report, or had a status of pending closure. The Division would be interested in receiving a list of the cases that the Auditor General has identified as still being included in the caseload, but also appear as "stale" cases. The Department has previously outlined the basis for the stale case listing, but will describe the report for the purposes of clarification for readers of the response. The stale case report is used to identify cases where DCYF no longer has an ongoing case management responsibility, but due to the lack of sufficient staff to manage its caseload, the case has not been fully closed in the automated system. The cases that appear on this report do not reflect cases where the case manager has not been monitoring an open case.

Page 10

The report indicates that, subsequent to the Auditor's completion of the field work, that CWLA changed its interpretation of the investigation standard. The Department does not believe the CWLA changed its interpretation of the standard for investigation, but rather provided clarification on how the standard should be interpreted.

THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSES TO THE INDIVIDUAL REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 1: PAGES 9 THROUGH 20

Finding 1, Recommendation 1:

The Division should take steps to ensure that it can accurately project its case manager staffing needs. The Division should ensure that:

- (a) Cases can be classified on its computerized case management system according to standards;
- (b) It includes only cases that are being actively worked; and
- (c) It includes all positions that regularly manage cases in its count of authorized case management positions.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is not agreed to and the recommendation will not be implemented.

While the Division agrees that the most accurate and timely information is vital to being able to determine caseload staffing needs, the Division has taken steps to insure that the information used as a basis for determining the required staffing needed to attain CWLA standards is accurate.

In addition, the Division believes that the use of June 2001 and June 2003 as the analysis points is not representative of the workload the Division has on an average monthly basis. June is historically a lower workload month due in part to children not being seen by many of the mandated reporting sources (i.e. teachers, bus drivers, counselors, etc.). As a comparison, the month of January 2003 was 20% higher in the number of investigations completed than in June 2003 (January 2003 – 2,720 Investigations; June 2003 – 2,182 Investigations). Using the Auditor General's methodology of 12 cases per worker, the Division showed 10,758 Cases in active status in January 2003, in June 2003 that number was down to 9,951.

As the Auditor General has pointed out, the Division's caseload increased by 30% between June 2001 and June 2003. This caseload growth has continued into FY 2004, and has been a leading cause of case worker turnover. The caseload has increased to an average monthly number of cases in FY 2004 (through August) of 10,248 cases. The Division's current caseload information indicates that, based upon CWLA standards, the following case manager to caseload ratios will exist in FY 2004:

Investigation per worker	1:15.8	(CWLA Standard is 1:12)
In-Home Cases	1:22.4	(CWLA Standard is 1:17)
Out-of-Home Children	1:21.9	(CWLA Standard is 1:15)

The Division's caseload as of July 2003 indicates:

- Investigations – 2,306 – CWLA Standards Indicate a Need of 192 Case Managers
- In-Home Cases – 2,895 – CWLA Standards Indicate a Need of 170 Case Managers
- Out-of-Home Children – 7,207 – CWLA Standards Indicate a Need of 480 Case Managers
- Total Case Managers Needed – 842
- Authorized Case Managers – 671.5
- Contracted FTE – 16
- Total Available Case Managers – 687.5
- Need – 155.5

Below are specific responses to the three recommendations that the Auditor General has made as a result of audit finding number one:

- a) The Division agrees that the classification of the case in the automated system is the preferred methodology in determining the type of case that the worker is handling. This change to the automated system will take time and additional resources to implement. In the mean time the Division will continue to use its methodology to determine the number of staff needed to attain CWLA standards. The Division believes that its use of the CWLA standards more closely identifies the need for case managers and conforms to the application of the standards as CWLA intended.
- b) The Division has already taken steps to insure that only cases that are open and actively being worked are included in the case count used as a basis for the staffing needed to attain CWLA standards. The Division will continue to refine its data extraction to insure that only those cases which require CPS staff involvement are included in the counts to determine staffing needs. The Division believes that the timeliness of data entry will improve with sufficient staffing to handle the caseloads that currently exist. When outside entities have identified that CPS case workers are having difficulty managing their caseloads, it speaks volumes about the need to provide adequate staffing to address caseload issues.
- c) The Division currently includes all case carrying FTE which SHOULD be carrying cases. The inclusion of CPS Unit Supervisors and CPS Program Specialists in the caseload ratios has artificially lowered the cases to case worker ratio. These staff do not carry full caseloads, and in most instances are only carrying cases due to staffing shortages or due to high profile issues involved in the case. By including these staff as full time, case carrying FTE, the ratio of cases to workers is lower than if these staff were pro-rated or eliminated all together. In determining the number of staff required to attain the CWLA standards, the Division includes authorized CPS Specialist positions and contracted case managers. This process insures that the Division does not request FTE's due to not being able to fill vacancies, etc. The Division does not believe that utilizing CPS Unit Supervisors as case carrying staff is applicable and goes against best practice standards. CPS Unit Supervisors oversee a unit of anywhere from 7-10 staff. Their time should be used to provide case consultation for the CPS Specialist, provide mentoring to new CPS Specialists, and managing the daily operations for their units. When these managers are required to carry a caseload, the entire organization suffers from not having adequate

oversight of staff who are involved in daily case management. The Division will continue to insure that supervisors or other specialized staff are not required to carry a caseload. It is detrimental to the well being of children and families to have supervisors carrying cases and not providing oversight and mentoring to CPS Specialists.

Finding 1, Recommendation 2:

The Division should also investigate factors that may be hindering its ability to effectively manage its caseloads, including:

- a. Continuing to investigate reasons for case manager turnover, attempting to fill vacant case manager positions, and researching best practices for enhancing retention; and
- b. Continuing to assess ways to streamline its case management processes, eliminate tasks, and assign case management tasks to support workers.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the recommendation will be implemented.

The Division agrees that further investigation of factors that hinder the ability of case managers to effectively manage their case loads is needed.

- a) The cause of high turnover and problems recruiting and retaining staff is a priority for the Division. To this end, the Division has already developed a request for additional resources to appropriately compensate CPS staff. This request will be considered during a special session of legislature that will commence on October 20, 2003. The Division will continue to conduct exit interviews with CPS staff who are leaving the Division for other employment opportunities. The results of these interviews are analyzed to determine more effective recruitment and retention initiatives to enhance the Division's ability to recruit and retain professional staff.
- b) The Governor's commission report on CPS has identified a need to streamline CPS processes and procedures (action steps 4.0, 4.1, 4.6, 5.2 and 5.3) in order to recruit and retain professional staff. The governor has outlined a timeline that the Division will be required to implement this action plan. By July 2004, the Division will be required to have completed its analysis and have implemented process improvements. The Division is currently developing an action plan to address the Governor's commission report. Several avenues for collecting feedback on what processes or procedures could be streamlined were developed during the monthly program managers meeting (a monthly meeting of district managers and Division management team members) held in October 2003.

Finding 1, Recommendation 3:

The Division should establish appropriate caseload standards for Arizona. In doing so, the Division should:

- (a) Assess workload factors through such means as focus groups with staff, and
- (b) Document any factors that are used to justify using CWLA's standards or Arizona-specific standards.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and a different method of dealing with the recommendation will be implemented.

The Division agrees that the most applicable way to determine staffing requirements is to develop a modified CWLA standard that is specific to the way Arizona approaches child protective services. The Division believes the development of this standard will illustrate a higher number of case managers required than what is developed using the base CWLA standards. Due to the complexity of cases that Arizona CPS workers carry, model court requirements, the high level of cases which involve substance abuse and the geographic challenges related to service provision the Division believes that the ratio of case managers to cases will be lower than what is proposed by CWLA as a standard.

- a) The Division will work with the six district program managers to develop a procedure to analyze the caseloads and how best to determine an appropriate caseload ratio for CPS staff. The Department has also enlisted its own audit and management services unit to assist the Division in this process. Audit and management services will provide technical assistance and analyze the Division's recommended caseload to determine if it approaches caseload standards in a method that conforms to CWLA standards and includes best practice guidelines.
- b) By including the audit and management service unit, the Division will be able to rely on the experience and expertise of these staff to provide documentation and justification on how the Arizona specific standards are developed. The Division will also incorporate the vast knowledge which exists within its own staff to document why the Arizona standards were developed and how the case practice in Arizona is better measured using the standards that will be developed out of this process.

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 2: PAGES 23 THROUGH 27

Finding 2, Recommendation 1:

The Division should revise its training curriculum to include additional practical classroom exercises for the computerized case management system, writing court reports, making referrals for services, and conducting interviews.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation is being implemented.

As part of the Department's practice improvement process for the Training Institute, the comments from CWTI's trainee evaluations, the Division's Case Review Process, and the Division's Continuous Quality Improvement Process are used to modify and upgrade the CWTI curriculum and delivery of training.

Using the information gleaned from the Division's review and analysis of the trainee evaluation forms, in addition to an ongoing analysis of the pre-training and post-training test results, the Division made modifications to the initial curriculum and process.

- The Case Planning curriculum has been redesigned, and is now being trained by a team. In addition, the training provides more hands-on use of the social services computer program used for documentation of case management activities.
- A tool was developed to assist new and current case managers on the concurrent case planning process.
- Plans are underway to implement forensic interviewing in both case management core and ongoing training. This training will assist case managers in increasing their skills in interviewing children and adults.
- The forensic training is also being designed to assist with documentation and report writing.
- Training staff have been reassigned to curriculum that better meets their training expertise.

Finding 2, Recommendation 2:

The Division should continue to take steps to ensure that the field portion of the training is implemented consistently statewide.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation is being implemented.

The DES Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) statewide Management Team will continue to assure that trainees are engaged in activities that assist them in practicing the concepts and knowledge imparted in the classroom. The DCYF Training Supervisors have developed a comprehensive list of "field work activities" which are expected of case manager trainees to perform during field days/weeks in both urban and rural Arizona communities.

The full implementation of this recommendation is contingent upon supervisors and case managers statewide having manageable workloads in order to attend to the learning needs of new and current staff.

Finding 2, Recommendation 3:

The Division should continue to use its exit interview surveys to assess why new case managers are leaving and develop strategies for addressing poor retention of new case managers.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendations are being implemented.

The DES DCYF conducts exit interviews and surveys with employees who leave the agency to glean information and trends regarding staff retention and turnover. Through analysis of these exit interviews, DES is aware of the primary reasons for staff turnover.

The turnover rate for Child Protective Services case managers was 23.5% on 12/31/02. Even though the turnover rate decreased to 17.96% on 6/30/03, the children and families whose case manager did leave the Agency still experience a significant negative effect due to case manager turnover. Children and families establish and build upon a “trust” with their designated case manager. This trust and relationship greatly assists in expediting permanency for children, thus, reducing the amount of time a child spends in foster care. When there is a change in a family’s case manager (staff turnover), there are many times breaks in the continuity and progress of the case and court activities necessary for achieving the child’s case plan goal. The family must re-build a trust and working relationship with the new case manager. It is unfortunate for the children and families, as case manager turnover often results in the “life” of a case being extended.

PLEASE NOTE: *The 23.5% and 17.96% turnover rates only include child protective service case managers who leave state service. These percentages do not take into consideration the many child protective services case managers that accept a promotional opportunity within DES or accept employment with another state agency.*

DES will continue using the information gleaned from exit interviews and surveys to further enhance our strategy for addressing staff recruitment and retention issues. Several of the primary reasons for staff leaving the Agency are the following (according to exit interviews reviewed):

- low salaries;
- the feeling of not being “valued” by the agency and community;
- the frustrations of dealing with meager resources and services to support families and children; and
- The lack of a progressive salary structure provided to most employees in private and public sector “career” positions.

Finding 2, Recommendation 4:

The Division should continue with its plans to revise its training evaluation forms. In doing so, the division should:

- a. Make certain that trainees are informed of the importance of their feedback for ensuring an effective training program and are strongly encouraged or required to provide feedback.
- b. Consider collaborating with the Arizona State University School of Social Work to help revise its forms.
- c. Examine using additional mechanisms to evaluate its new case manager trainee program, such as obtaining feedback from new trainees' supervisors and mentors through either questionnaires or focus groups.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendations are being implemented.

- a) The Division consistently reinforces to trainees the importance of their candid input regarding the format and curriculum of the training provided. DCYF discusses the evaluation forms and specific evaluation items at the beginning of the training. This aids trainees in their focus during the classroom sessions. DCYF uses the information obtained from trainee evaluation forms for improvements and changes in the training program. In addition to having the trainees complete an evaluation form immediately after completing the CWTI, DES also asks the trainees to complete an evaluation survey after three months of field employment. The information gleaned from this post-training evaluation provides excellent feedback regarding the usefulness of the training when on-the job.
- b) The Division has greatly enhanced our collaborations with the Arizona State University School of Social Work. The DES and ASU partnership has benefited and expanded our advanced education program (Masters of Social Work Program) for staff, in addition to providing our Division and staff with consultation and technical assistance from many of the University professors. Our collaborations with the University's School of Social Work includes a review of forms for several of our program areas.
- c) Supervisors, mentors, and others have a voice and ability to comment on training through the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process, the training work group, advisory group, and monthly administrative meetings. In October 2003, the DES added the use of focus groups of recent CWTI graduates to further enhance our evaluation process.

Finding 2, Recommendation 5:

To ensure that the Division complies with the legislative mandate regarding not assigning caseload duties to trainees, it should:

- (a) Establish a written policy that prohibits trainees from being assigned as the primary or only case manager on a case, and clarifies that trainees may be assigned case tasks only for training purposes.
- (b) Ensure that all appropriate individuals are informed of this policy.

- (c) Develop and implement a mechanism or process to routinely monitor its trainees' work assignments.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and a different method of dealing with the finding will be implemented.

- a) For the most part, trainees in the CWTI are not designated as the primary or only case manager on a case; however, under close supervision and monitoring, the Division believes that certain case managers in the CWTI are qualified to perform case management duties. Frequently, the Division hires and enrolls in the CWTI child protective services case managers that are new to Arizona, however, have many years of previous child protective services experience. These staff are viewed as highly experienced and qualified to perform case management functions under close supervision and monitoring while completing the CWTI. The Division also relies upon this group of experienced and qualified CWTI participants to assume case management function due to our resource limitations and staffing shortages.

In order for these case managers to expeditiously receive case-specific information and alerts through the Division's automated system, their system's profile must be designated as "primary" case manager; however, as previously stated, their duties and responsibilities are closely supervised and monitored.

In addition to the staff referenced above, the Division will specify that other trainees may be assigned specific case tasks as an on-the-job supplement to their current training curriculum. The carrying-out of certain case activities is considered an integral part of core training and adult education.

Many national experts concur that the best and most appropriate way to train our workforce is to have trainees carry a small workload under close supervision with careful oversight attention to learning needs. This caseload should be gradually increased in accordance with the individual's proficiency in carrying out their duties.

- b) The above methodology and process will be conveyed to the Division's Management Team. It is essential that classroom training is supplemented by actual field work, performed under close supervision and monitoring.
- c) The Division's Management Team will develop/enhance a process that will better assure that a trainee's work assignments are within the appropriate scope of work, and closely supervised.

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 3: PAGES 29 THROUGH 31

Finding 3, Recommendation 1:

The Division should determine an appropriate supervisor-to-case manager ratio for Arizona by assessing and documenting workload factors impacting its supervisors, such as turnover and staff experience level.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented, contingent upon appropriate resources.

The DES DCYF acknowledges that an appropriate case manager-to-supervisor ratio is essential for stabilizing workload issues and providing supervisors with the time needed to support and mentor case managers. To effectively provide the case management services necessary for optimal child welfare and child protective services, the supervisor-to-case manager ratio must be realistic.

The Department requested and received detailed information from the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) regarding a supervisor-to-case manager ratio. The ratio recommended by the CWLA is one-to-five, which is one supervisor for five case managers. While we would like to implement this ratio throughout Child Protective Services in Arizona, due to resource and funding limitations, we feel that a one-to-six ratio (supervisor to case manager) is more feasible at this time.

Finding 3, Recommendation 2:

Once the Division has determined an appropriate supervisor-to-staff ratio for Arizona, the Division should:

- (a) Explore the feasibility of reallocating existing supervisors positions within the districts to ensure that all districts meet the approved standards; and
- (b) Determine if any new positions could be funded from its existing budget.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and, wherever feasible, the recommendation will be implemented-- contingent upon available resources.

- a) The DES DCYF routinely assesses the feasibility of reallocating case manager and supervisor positions from one office/area to another. Predominately in the urban areas, as populations significantly grow in an area, the staffing composition for the office(s) in that area is reviewed. This can result in a supervisor-to-case manager ratio exceeding a one-to-six ratio. Due to the great distance between many offices in the rural areas, it is not practical to have a supervisor and case managers in every office. It is more efficient allocation of resources to have one supervisor provide oversight and leadership for more than one office. This can result in a supervisor-to-case manager ratio which is under a one-to-six ratio.

Even using the above-mentioned staffing management processes, the critical need for additional support staff, case managers, and office space remains.

- b) The DES DCYF continuously assesses the use of current funding for needed resources. Requests for additional direct service and supervisory positions for child protective services are for positions that are not currently funded through the existing budget appropriation.

The Auditor General's Report indicates that many supervisors throughout the state are "carrying cases". This observation appears to further support the need for additional staff.

Finding 3, Recommendation 3:

The Division should take steps to fill vacant supervisor positions.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented as resources become available.

DES is aware of the ongoing need to recruit and retain CPS supervisors and consistently tries to expeditiously fill every vacant supervisory position. Barriers such as the enormity of the workload, job-related stress, inability to pay "time-and-one-half" overtime compensation, and the lack of a progressive salary system has resulted in an insufficient pool of staff who is interested in becoming supervisors. Due to the high volume workload, experienced case managers can earn greater annual compensation as a case manager than through promotion to a supervisor. (Supervisors are not eligible for the time-and-one-half hourly overtime compensation that case managers earn when the work week exceeds 40 consecutive work hours.)

Finding 3, Recommendation 4:

The Division should develop and implement strategies for increasing CPS supervisor retention, including continuing the accreditation process through the Council on Accreditation.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented as resources become available.

A current and ongoing focus of DES DCYF is staff retention, both at the supervisory level and the case management level. The present salary structure and range, combined with the high level of educational degree requirements many times poses a barrier to our ability to retain qualified supervisors.

DES DCYF has taken the following measures to improve the retention and training of supervisors:

- The entire Supervisory Core Curriculum and Training was rewritten and implemented in December 2002. However, due to budget constraints, training classes were placed on hold and resumed in September 2003. During this interim period, the DES DCYF continued to examine the curriculum, increase the number of trained trainers, and enhance the delivery of classroom content.
- The National Resource Centers have committed to working with Arizona on a workload analysis process, which has tremendous potential for supervisors and the case managers regarding workload management, family strengths assessments, and matching resources to family needs. This work will commence in early 2004.

- The Division also established a supervisory workgroup whose members are selected by their colleagues to serve one year terms and functions as a sounding board for training needs, training plans and works to put suggestions into practice
- We have already delivered Management for Effective Leadership in many of our Districts and we are now working on how to reinforce those leadership concepts and implement them throughout the Division.

Finding 3, Recommendation 5:

The Division should deliver a comprehensive training program to new and existing CPS supervisors to ensure they are equipped with the appropriate level of skills to complete their job. To do so, the Division should:

- a. Ensure the consistent delivery of the supervisor core curriculum to newly promoted CPS supervisors.
- b. Continue to use its supervisor workgroup to identify ways to improve the supervisory training.
- c. Develop a centralized continuing education program specifically focused on the CPS supervisor's professional developmental needs.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

- a) The Division has rewritten and reformatted the CPS Supervisor Core Training Program. Through input received by management, staff, training advisory committee members, and etc., the CPS Supervisor Core Curriculum addresses the issues, responsibilities, and duties of the newly promoted supervisor in a consistent delivery structure and format. Policy, approval, oversight, and quality assurance issues are addressed, as relevant to the supervisory role, in addition to personnel, legal, and leadership knowledge and expectations.

We are pleased to have received favorable comments from the participants of Supervisor Core Training regarding the curriculum and delivery of the training.

- b) As stated above, the input of many interested parties is used in developing and revising the curriculum used for Supervisor Core Training. Input from workgroup members, management team, continuous quality improvement teams, and advisory groups are used in assessing curriculum content.
- c) The Division is continuously pursuing advanced education programs and trainings for supervisors. The Division has strengthened our partnerships with Arizona State University and the University of Arizona, and is continuing to bring national child welfare experts to Arizona in an effort to provide continuing education to staff and supervisors.

The Division is pleased to have implemented training curriculum regarding "Effective Leadership" and "Developing a High Performance Organization". This continuing education curriculum greatly benefits supervisors and is rated well by the attendees.

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 4: PAGES 37 THROUGH 41

Finding 4, Recommendation 1:

The Division should enhance concurrent case planning within its new case manager training to include the assessment tool that should be used to help determine whether concurrent case planning is appropriate. In doing so, it may want to review the curriculum developed by Lutheran Community Services Northwest.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

The DES DCYF is assessing the concurrent case planning training and assessment tools that are used in training and providing in the ACYF Policy Manual, both as policy and as an Assessment Tool (ACYF Policy Manual Exhibit 9). The policy and tool are now provided to new case managers as part of training.

As part of our current collaborations with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the DCYF is being provided with technical assistance on the concurrent case planning training and assessment tools used by agencies such as Lutheran Community Services Northwest, the National Resource Center on Permanency, and the National Resource Center on Family-Centered Practice. The Division welcomes the opportunity to review curriculum and tools used throughout the country.

Finding 4, Recommendation 2:

The Division should provide additional statewide training on concurrent case planning to all existing case managers and supervisors, and ensure that they attend this training.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation is being implemented.

During May 2001, Concurrent Case Planning Training was provided for direct service staff statewide, in three (3) locations. In Phoenix, 90 staff attended this training; in Tucson, 85 staff attended, and in Flagstaff, 60 staff attended the training. This training was coordinated with national experts, through a federally-contracted National Resource Center. The DES DCYF has incorporated the concepts of this training into the CWTI Case Manager Core Training.

The DES DCYF will continue to provide concurrent case planning training to current direct service staff during the current and upcoming year. We will use various means of adult education training, such as Computer-Based-Training (CBT) and Video-Tape training to educate staff on concurrent case planning. Video-tape training has received favorable comments from Agency staff as they can view the video at unit meetings, pause the tape, discuss the content, role play, and continue the video until completion.

Finding 4, Recommendation 3:

The Division should continue to seek technical assistance from the national resource centers to develop and conduct concurrent case planning training for existing staff.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation is being implemented.

The Department is continuing our collaborative efforts with our federal child welfare partners, including experts from National Resource Centers. Conference calls, on-site training presentations, and correspondence between DCYF and the National Resource Centers have occurred throughout this calendar year, with future sessions already scheduled.

The DES DCYF has recently been recognized by our federal partners as being innovative, as we “combined” the expertise of three national resource centers in developing our policy, training, and tools. The three resource centers offered expertise in family-centered practice, permanency and foster care, and child maltreatment.

Concurrent case planning is a difficult concept for many case managers to implement, and as such, the Department plans to continue emphasizing this concept in future trainings. The Division plans on using the skills of current staff who are familiar with the concepts of concurrent case planning to assist in the training.

Finding 4, Recommendation 4:

The Division should provide information on concurrent case planning to stakeholders such as assistant attorneys general, foster home recruitment agencies and juvenile court judges.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation will be implemented.

During September 2003, the DES DCYF provided training to Arizona's juvenile court judges during a statewide forum near Tucson, Arizona. Positive feedback was received from the juvenile court judges regarding this training.

The Division plans on providing information regarding concurrent case planning to the Assistant Attorneys General and appropriate contract providers.

Finding 4, Recommendation 5:

The Division should continue to research and apply other best-practice strategies that increase permanency.

DES Response:

The finding of the Auditor General is agreed to and the audit recommendation is being implemented.

The DES DCYF is continuing to research and apply other best-practice strategies in an effort to increase permanency for children in out-of-home placement. DES DCYF has established a working relationship with an excellent network of nationwide child welfare experts, and benefits from ongoing consultation with this network regarding best-practice issues.