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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

WILLIAM THOMSON
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

November 22, 2006

The Honorable Laura Knaperek, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Robert Blendu, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Representative Knaperek and Senator Blendu:

Our Office has recently completed a 30-month followup of the Department of Economic Security's Division of Children, Youth and Families, Child Protective Services—Caseloads and Training regarding the implementation status of the 29 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in October 2003 (Auditor General Report No. 03-09). As the attached grid indicates:

- 24 have been fully implemented;
- 2 have been partially implemented; and
- 3 are in the process of being implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this report concludes our follow-up work on the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations from the October 2003 performance audit report.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

DD:Acm
Attachment

cc: Tracy Wareing, Director
Department of Economic Security

Ken Deibert, Deputy Director
Department of Economic Security—Division of Children, Youth and Families

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Division of Children, Youth and Families
Child Protective Services—Caseloads and Training
30-Month Follow-Up Report To
Auditor General Report No. 03-09

FINDING 1: Several changes needed to accurately project case manager staffing needs

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>1. The Division should take steps to ensure that it can accurately project its case manager staffing needs. The Division should ensure that:</p> <p>a. Cases can be classified on its computerized case management system according to standards;</p>	<p>Partially Implemented</p>	<p>The Division has modified the structure and coding of its CPS field units in its automated case management system – CHILDS – to better allow it to identify cases and case manager positions according to its three case-type caseload standards (i. e., investigations, in-home cases, and foster care cases). However, the changes do not allow for automated identification of all specialized case types. For example, auditors determined that grouped within the three case-type designations are cases that are being managed and worked by contracted case managers. The Division has an in-home unit with 8 CPS case managers who are assigned to monitor cases being worked by contracted case managers providing intensive in-home services. In fiscal year 2006, the average monthly caseloads for each of these 8 CPS case managers ranged between 56 and 85 because they were only monitoring, not working, the cases. While this caseload size is appropriate for monitoring purposes, because the Division’s automated system does not make a distinction between the cases worked and monitored by the Division, the Division could potentially request 24 CPS case managers for this unit as the standard is 19 in-home cases per CPS case manager. The Division indicates that it is not planning on making further modification to its case-type designations as it believes that its caseload standards already account for any caseload size differences that are due to specialized case types. Although it does not yet have a plan in place for doing so, the Division indicates that it will account for specialized case type differences when estimating staffing needs and will continue to explore improvements to its ability to track and manage caseload numbers.</p>

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FINDING 1: Several changes needed to accurately project case manager staffing needs (cont'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
b. It includes only cases that are actively worked; and	Partially Implemented	In March 2006, the Division added additional edits to CHILDS that increase supervisors' ability to monitor the progress of investigations and better ensure they are completed and closed in a timely manner and not allowed to linger in the caseload as open but inactive division cases. However, because the actual process used to count cases has not been revised, if supervisors do not ensure investigations are closed in a timely manner, the process will continue to include inactive investigations in the caseload counts.
c. It includes all positions that regularly manage cases in its count of authorized case management positions.	Implementation in Process	The Division only includes CPS specialist positions in its count of authorized CPS case management staff. However, it has a few CPS case-carrying positions that do not fall within the CPS specialist series, including human service specialists (HSS) and CPS program specialists (CPSPS). As the HSS positions become vacant, the Division is reclassifying them into the CPS specialist series. In regard to the CPSPS, the Division is discussing with the individuals in these positions the possibility of taking a voluntary demotion to CPS specialist.

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Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
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	Implemented at 6 Months	
b. Continuing to assess ways to streamline its case management processes, eliminate tasks, and assign case management tasks to support workers.	Implemented at 30 Months¹	
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	Implemented at 24 Months	

¹ Although the Division has streamlined some of its processes, this should continue to be an ongoing activity.

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FINDING 1: Several changes needed to accurately project case manager staffing needs (concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
b. Document any factors that are used to justify using CWLA's standards or Arizona-specific standards.	Implemented at 24 Months	

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FINDING 2: Training hours have significantly increased, but other improvements needed

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
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.	Implemented at 24 Months	
2. The Division should continue to take steps to ensure that the field portion of the training is implemented consistently state-wide.	Implementation in Process	This recommendation is closely related to Finding 1, recommendations 1 through 7 in the Auditor General report titled <i>On-the-Job Training and Continuing Education</i> (No. CPS-0601). The status of this recommendation will be assessed during the follow-up process for that report.
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.	Implemented at 18 Months	

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FINDING 2: Training hours have significantly increased, but other improvements needed (cont'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
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.	Implemented at 18 Months	
b. Consider collaborating with the Arizona State University School of Social Work to help revise its forms.	Implemented at 18 Months	
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.	Implemented at 6 Months	

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FINDING 2: Training hours have significantly increased, but other improvements needed (concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
5. To ensure the Division complies with the legislative mandate regarding not assigning caseload duties to trainees, it should:		
a. Establish 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.	Implemented at 24 Months	
b. Ensure that all appropriate individuals are informed of this policy.	Implemented at 24 Months	
c. Develop and implement a mechanism or process to routinely monitor its trainees' work assignments.	Implemented at 30 Months	

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FINDING 3: Steps needed to improve case manager supervisory oversight (cont'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
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.	Implemented at 18 Months	
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,	Implemented at 18 Months	
b. Determine if any new positions could be funded from its existing budget.	Implemented at 18 Months	
3. The Division should take steps to fill vacant supervisor positions.	Implemented at 12 Months	

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FINDING 3: Steps needed to improve case manager supervisory oversight (concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. The Division should develop and implement strategies for increasing CPS supervisor retention, including continuing the accreditation process through the Council on Accreditation.	Implemented at 18 Months	
2. 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 needed to complete their job. To do so, the Division should:		
a. Ensure consistent delivery of the supervisor core curriculum to newly promoted CPS supervisors.	Implemented at 12 Months	
b. Continue to use its supervisor workgroup to identify ways to improve the supervisory training.	Implemented at 12 Months	
c. Develop a standardized continuing education program specifically focused on the CPS supervisors' professional development needs.	Implementation in Process	This recommendation is closely related to Finding 1, recommendations 1 through 7 in the Auditor General report titled <i>On-the-Job Training and Continuing Education</i> (No. CPS-0601). The status of this recommendation will be assessed during the follow-up process for that report

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FINDING 4: Efforts needed to further improve children’s permanency outcomes

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
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.	Implemented at 18 Months	
2. The Division should provide additional state-wide training on concurrent case planning to all existing case managers and supervisors, and ensure that they attend this training.	Implemented at 24 Months	
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.	Implemented at 12 Months	
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.	Implemented at 12 Months	

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FINDING 4: Efforts needed to further improve children’s permanency outcomes (concl’d)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
5. The Division should continue to research and apply other best-practice strategies that increase permanency.	Implemented at 12 Months	