



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Governor

David A. Berns
Director

Ms. Debra K. Davenport, CPA
Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
2910 North 44th Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

Dear Ms. Davenport:

The Department of Economic Security is providing the enclosed response to the Auditor General's Child Protective Services Training performance audit.

We are pleased that your office recognizes the tremendous improvements that have been made to the content of the Child Protective Services core training curriculum in the past two years. Enhancement of the training to include more subject areas – including forensic interviewing techniques taught by community experts – as well as increased, hands-on experiences in areas such as our electronic database, safety and risk assessments and case planning, have given our new case managers a much stronger foundation to work from.

We agree that CPS needs to enhance and standardize the field training experiences of our new workers; this complements the improved classroom instruction they have received. Thank you for acknowledging the progress that has been made with the addition of field training supervisors to help unit supervisors work with new case managers. We are very excited about the field training pilot program in Pima County, as well as the lessons we are learning from District-level efforts to support new employees. The most promising strategies from those efforts will become the best practices used statewide.

We appreciate your work on this report, your consideration of our previous comments and suggestions, and your acknowledgement of the quality and variety of training already provided by this Division. We look forward to reporting to you the additional improvements that will be made in the coming months.

Please feel free to call me at (602) 542-5678 if any 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 TRAINING
APRIL 2006**

The Department of Economic Security (DES) is pleased to provide the following comments and responses to the findings and recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General's performance audit of the Division of Children, Youth, and Families Child Protective Services Training.

Comments to Introduction and Background

Working to implement the Recommendations of the Governor's Commission on CPS Reform, the Division of Children, Youth, and Families has undergone tremendous change, in policy, practice, and responsibilities. As acknowledged in the Auditor General's report, the training for Child Protective Services case managers has undergone dramatic change in that time as well. As noted in the audit, the basic case manager core has been extended from 4 to 6 weeks, and now includes extensive hands-on training in the CHILDS case management database, as well as practice in case-planning, service referrals, interviewing and court testimony. Additional time is now allotted for more practice scenarios in assessing child safety and creating safety plans. There is a full day of Forensic Interviewing in this core, taught by a community professional. The training now incorporates a field break week that allows for transfer of learning to occur.

At the same time, field training supervisors have been added in each district to assist unit supervisors with the field portion of the case managers' training. However, these positions have been fully staffed and operational state-wide for just over one year. As with any new model, the guidelines, roles, and responsibilities of each of the players have been evolving and solidifying over the course of this year. The Child Welfare Training Institute staff have researched other models, learned from experience, and now have a greater understanding of what is needed for an optimal field training experience for new staff. The guidelines reflected in the newly revised field training manual will reflect that understanding, will provide a more formal outline for that field training to follow, and will aid the coordination between Training Institute staff and CPS unit supervisors.

As noted in this audit as well, the Training Institute partnered with District 2 in an important Mentoring/Coaching pilot for new case managers, the results of which are very promising. The best elements of this and other innovative practices will be incorporated into best practice across our entire system.

In addition to specific field training experiences provided to new case managers by field training supervisors and unit supervisors, other training and support opportunities also exist for new case managers. New case managers are encouraged to call the Training Institute with questions and for assistance; the Training Institute provides refreshers in the CHILDS case management database, as well as the Child Safety Assessment, and Safety and Risk Assessment tools. Although less quantifiable and not mentioned by the

auditors, a vital source of support is the informal field training that occurs as new case managers build relationships with more experienced colleagues and community partners.

The Division acknowledges the importance of providing a field training manual and accompanying instruction to all staff who provide field training, including unit supervisors. The Division is also engaged in a number of other activities to provide education and support to those supervisors in the performance of their duties. These include supervision circles, critical decision-making seminars, a revision of the Supervisor Core to better meet their needs, and the creation of continuing education courses that will assist them in their growth as supervisors and in their support of new case managers.

The Division agrees with the recommendations in this report, and had in fact already begun implementation of these recommendations as an outgrowth of the changes in practice and in training over the last two years.

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 1: PAGES 7 – 16

Finding 1, Recommendation 1

To ensure that staff are informed of training requirements, the Division should implement comprehensive policies regarding case manager training, including ones relating to field training.

DES Response

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

While the outline and structure of both the core training and the field training component are extensively described in the Child and Family Services Plan (IVB Report) Section V, page 150-164, the Division does acknowledge the need for creating more comprehensive training policies and communicating those to all staff. These policies will address not only classroom core training, but also the field component of case manager training, and the policy regarding continuing education as outlined by the CPS Reform Commission's Recommendations.

Finding 1, Recommendation 2

The Division should finalize its field training manual by June 2006.

DES Response

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

The Division agrees that the provision of consistent guidelines regarding implementation of field training are vital to a well-trained workforce, and that the revision of its Field Training Manual needs to be completed. The Division will complete this Revised Field Training Manual, as outlined in Recommendation 3 below, by June 30, 2006.

Finding 1, Recommendation 3

The Division's finalized field training manual should include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- a. Overview of the entire new case manager training program.
- b. Field training and unit supervisor's roles and responsibilities.
- c. Training requirements and expectations.
- d. Shadow forms.

DES Response

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

- a) The Division agrees that the revised field training manual should include basic information about the entire new case manager training program, including a description of the case manager classroom core training content.
- b) The Division's revised field training manual will also include the roles and responsibilities for both the field training supervisors and unit supervisors.
- c) The Division agrees to include fundamental guidelines for training requirements and expectations to ensure basic quality and consistency state-wide. Since the needs of each District in the state vary (e.g. urban vs. rural populations), it is understood that additional training may occur in each District that specifically meets the needs of case managers in their geographic area. This would be in addition to those requirements set forth in the state-wide field training manual.
- d) The Division agrees that the revised field training manual will include the field training checklist and shadow forms, as well as other information and guidelines to prepare those supervisors to provide appropriate field experiences.

Finding 1, Recommendation 4

After the detailed requirements and expectations are developed, the Division should review its field training checklist and shadow forms and make any needed corresponding changes.

DES Response

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

The Division agrees that as the requirements and expectations are more fully developed, it will be necessary to review the field training checklist and shadow forms, and alter them as needed to correlate with the content. Because the Districts vary in their composition and job functioning, the guidelines and content for the revised field training manual will be designed to ensure fundamental quality and consistency, while allowing flexibility and enhancements from each district.

Finding 1, Recommendation 5

After the field training manual is finalized, the Division should ensure it is consistently implemented by:

- a. Providing the manual to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors.
- b. Providing formal training to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors, on their roles and responsibilities, including implementing the field training manual.

DES Response

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

The Division acknowledges the importance of training all staff who provide field training to new case managers, including providing them with a copy of the field training manual.

- a) The Division agrees to provide the revised field training manual to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors.
- b) The Division agrees to provide formal training to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors, on their roles and responsibilities, including implementing the field training manual. Currently, the field training supervisors do receive informal training and supervision from their field training coordinator. However, the Division plans to implement *formal* training of both field training supervisors and CPS unit supervisors in their roles and responsibilities, as well as implementation of the manual, both on an initial and an ongoing basis.

Finding 1, Recommendation 6

The Division should better monitor field training consistency by:

- a. Enforcing the existing requirement that completed field training documentation, including field training checklists, be submitted to the Training Institute.
- b. Developing a process to review whether the checklists have been completed and providing feedback to the field training and unit supervisors on what additional training is necessary to ensure that required topics have been covered.

DES Response

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

In the interest of better monitoring consistency in the field portion of the training, the Division agrees to:

- a) Enforce the existing requirement that completed field training documentation, including field training checklists, be submitted to the Training Institute; and
- b) Develop a process to review whether the checklists have been completed, and provide feedback to the field training and unit supervisors on what additional training is necessary to ensure that required topics have been covered.

Finding 1, Recommendation 7:

The Division should use the results of the ongoing Arizona State University evaluation of the new case manager training program to identify and implement appropriate training program improvements, including improvements specific to field training.

DES Response:

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

The Division has extended and enhanced its collaboration with the Arizona State University School of Social Work:

Over the course of 2005, ASU and CWTI developed a “Self-Assessment of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.” This self-assessment survey is now provided to all new case manager trainees at four points during their first year of employment. It is completed (1) as a Pre-Core Test; (2) Post-Core; (3) after the end of their training period (approximately 22 weeks); and (4) at the end of their first year of employment. This survey is currently available on-line for ease and consistency of completion, and it is then tabulated by ASU Social Work faculty. As of March 1, this survey has now been in use for one year. ASU School of Social Work expects to have its report on the results no later than June 30, 2006. The Training Institute intends to use the results of this survey to assess the efficacy of its new case manager training program and to implement improvements as indicated

by the results. Because the surveys are done over the course of one year, the results should allow for evaluation of both the Core training and the field portion of the case manager training. In addition to this, the Training Institute hopes to differentially assess the results from those trainees who participated in the Mentoring Pilot in District 2, so that the Division may assess the success of that pilot.

Finding 2, Recommendation 1

The Division should establish a timeline for completing its case manager and supervisor continuing education program.

DES Response

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

The Division acknowledges the need to set a timeline for enhancement and formalization of its continuing education program. As outlined in the Auditor General's report, the Division provides many opportunities for continuing education at present. Work began on formalizing and enhancing the continuing education program, including needs assessment and course identification, during July of 2005. Course descriptions and competencies are currently being finalized for case managers, and offering of those courses will proceed, dependent upon allocation of resources to provide them. The Division plans to continue, to the best of its ability, and contingent upon resources, to expand its efforts to provide a variety of training opportunities that will meet the CPS Reform Commission's recommended 24 hours of annual training for CPS staff.

Finding 2, Recommendation 2

The Division should develop a written policy on its continuing education requirements and communicate this policy to its staff.

DES Response

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 3

The Division should take steps to ensure that its new continuing education courses are provided throughout the State so that all staff are able to meet the continuing education requirements.

DES Response:

The Division agrees with the Auditor General's finding, and the recommendation will be implemented, contingent upon appropriate resources.

Finding 2, Recommendation 4

The Division should establish requirements on the types of training courses that will qualify as continuing education, and establish and implement review procedures to ensure that it grants continuing education credit only for courses that meet these requirements.

DES Response:

The Division agrees with the Auditor General's finding and the recommendation is being implemented.

The Division recently implemented a review process to assess which conferences would be appropriate to enhance CPS staff's knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Division will further work to create guidelines, and to only grant credit for those trainings, courses, or seminars which qualify as continuing education by meeting those guidelines.

Finding 2, Recommendation 5

To ensure that caseworkers receive the required amount of training, the Division should:

- a) Ensure that training attendance records are entered into CHILDS in a timely manner, and
- b) Develop summary reports that will allow Training Institute staff to monitor compliance with continuing education policy requirements.

DES Response:

The Division agrees with the Auditor General's finding, and the recommendation is being implemented.

- a) The Division is currently able to enter and track its training records for individual caseworkers through its case management system, known as CHILDS. The Division will ensure that these training records are entered into CHILDS in a timely manner.
- b) The Division is currently working with the CHILDS department to develop summary reports that will allow the Training Institute to monitor compliance with continuing education policy requirements.

Finding 2, Recommendation 6

To ensure that its continuing education program is effective, the Division should establish a process for assessing the program and for making adjustments as appropriate.

DES Response:

The Division agrees with the Auditor General's finding, and the recommendation is being implemented.

- a) The Division currently administers course evaluations to attendees of currently offered Advanced trainings, as well as the CHILDS refresher trainings, and monitors the responses to those training courses. These evaluations assess the quality of both the instructors and of the learning outcomes achieved.
- b) As the continuing education program is enhanced and other courses are offered, the Division plans to administer similar course evaluations to the attendees of these courses.
The Division plans to continue to review these evaluations and make adjustments based on the results. For example, based on course evaluations, changes were recently made to a District 1 CHILDS Investigations Refresher course: That course was lengthened and adjusted to allow for a job-specific question-and-answer period in the class.
- c) In addition, the Division plans to conduct an overall assessment of the continuing education program, determine its effectiveness, and identify further needs, in order to make appropriate adjustments to the program overall.