

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry Annual Compliance Review of Specific Statutory and Policy Requirements

Department released all 31 inmates we reviewed within earned release time frames but did not timely release 2 inmates to the transition program; enrolled more inmates in major programs from the prior year, but program completions decreased; and did not enter some program completions into its inmate management system, increasing the risk of untimely inmate releases

Audit purpose

To annually review the Department's compliance with statutory requirements related to specific inmate release programs and annual reports, its statutory purpose to rehabilitate inmates, and its own policies regarding reporting guidelines.¹

Key findings

- ▶ Department released all 31 inmates we reviewed according to earned release credit program time frames, and correctly determined transition program eligibility for these 31 inmates, but untimely released 2 of 20 eligible inmates to the transition program, which may lengthen prison stays and increase Department costs.
- ▶ Department enrolled 17,480 inmates in self-improvement, education, and treatment major programs in fiscal year 2024, accounting for 22,962 unique enrollments and an enrollment increase from the prior 2 years. However, the number of program completions decreased 2%, and the number of noncompletions increased 15% from fiscal year 2023, potentially resulting in inmates not receiving programs' intended benefits.
- ▶ Department failed to enter postsecondary education data into its inmate management system (ACIS) for approximately 18 months, increasing the risk that it does not release some inmates early as required by statute.
- ▶ Our prior audits included 48 recommendations, including timely releasing inmates eligible for release programs, increasing inmate program enrollment/completions, and improving its inmate-grievance process. The Department has implemented or partially implemented 18 recommendations, is still implementing 19, and has not implemented 3, and 8 are no longer applicable or were superseded by new recommendations.

Key recommendations to the Department

- ▶ Develop and implement a process for timely entering all postsecondary education program data into ACIS and enter data dating back to September 2023.

¹ The Arizona Auditor General conducted this annual compliance review pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §41-1610.02. Effective September 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02 and transferred the responsibility of conducting the Department's annual compliance review to the Independent Correctional Oversight Office.