

Special Report

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



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August 14, 2025

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor

Director Thornell

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry

Transmitted herewith is the Auditor General's report, *Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry—Annual Compliance Review of Specific Statutory and Policy Requirements*. This is the third annual report we have completed pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1610.02, conducted under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes §41-1279.03. I am also transmitting within this report a copy of the Report Highlights to provide a quick summary for your convenience.

As outlined in its response, the Department agrees with the finding within Chapter 5 and plans to implement all the recommendations. I express my appreciation to Director Thornell and Department staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout the audit.

Effective September 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02 and transferred the responsibility of conducting the Department's annual compliance review to a newly created Independent Correctional Oversight Office. We plan to collaborate with the Independent Correctional Oversight Office regarding future followup work to assess the Department's efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. In summer 2026, we will assess the Department's efforts to implement the applicable outstanding recommendations, including new recommendations we made in this year's report.

My staff and I will be pleased to discuss or clarify items in the report.

Sincerely,

Lindsey A. Perry

Lindsey A. Perry, CPA, CFE
Auditor General

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1

- ▶ Department's statutory purpose
- ▶ Compliance review encompasses various Department operational areas
- ▶ Legislature established Independent Correctional Oversight Office to monitor and report on Department compliance with statutory and Department policy requirements

CHAPTER 1

5

Department calculated earned release credits for all eligible inmates we reviewed consistent with statute

- ▶ Department required to determine inmates' eligibility for earned release credit programs and release inmates according to their eligibility time frames
- ▶ Department correctly identified, calculated, and released all 31 inmates we reviewed based on their statutory release eligibility
- ▶ Department has implemented our 2021 recommendation related to the drug possession release earned release credit program
- ▶ Department has made progress on, but not yet fully implemented, our recommendation to develop periodic training for staff related to earned release credit program provisions and requirements

CHAPTER 2

9

Department complied with transition program eligibility requirements but did not timely release 2 of 20 inmates we reviewed to the transition program and has not fully implemented our previous recommendation related to its process to approve inmate releases to the transition program

- ▶ Department correctly determined transition program eligibility for all 31 inmates we reviewed
- ▶ Department untimely released 2 of 20 eligible inmates we reviewed to the transition program because it did not timely approve their program eligibility, which may lengthen prison stays and increase Department costs
- ▶ Department has implemented our 2021 recommendation related to the drug transition program

- ▶ Department has not yet implemented 1 of our recommendations related to processes that may delay inmate transition program releases

CHAPTER 3

12

Department timely notified all 3 victims we reviewed of an inmate's early release in accordance with statute, but provided an incorrect notification letter to 1 victim

- ▶ Statute requires the Department to notify victims of inmates' pending transition program release and provide victims the opportunity to object to early release
- ▶ Department notified all 3 victims we reviewed within required statutory time frame, but its notification letter did not inform 1 of 3 victims of 20-day time frame to object to an inmate's early release to the transition program

CHAPTER 4

15

Department increased unique major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024; however, the number of program completions decreased while the number of program noncompletions increased from fiscal year 2023

- ▶ Department enrolls inmates in major programs, in accordance with its statutory purposes, based on key factors
- ▶ The Department enrolled 17,480 inmates into major programs in fiscal year 2024, accounting for 22,962 unique major program enrollments and an increase in enrollments from fiscal years 2022 and 2023, but the number of program completions decreased and the number of noncompletions increased as compared to fiscal year 2023
- ▶ Department has made progress toward implementing recommendations related to monitoring and updating its enrollment guidance to help reduce major program noncompletions but has not fully implemented recommendations we made in multiple prior reviews

CHAPTER 5

20

Department failed to enter postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS for approximately 18 months and lacks a documented process for doing so, increasing the risk that it does not release some inmates early as required by statute

- ▶ Department failed to enter postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS between September 2023 and February 2025, increasing the risk of releasing inmates eligible for drug possession release late

- ▶ Department lacks a documented process for entering postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS

Recommendations to the Department

22

CHAPTER 6

23

Department complied with all statutory requirements for its earned release credit program report but did not comply with all statutory requirements for the transition program and drug and alcohol treatment programs reports

- ▶ Department earned release credit program report included all statutorily required information
- ▶ Department's fiscal year 2024 transition program reports included all statutorily required information but were not distributed to all required parties
- ▶ Department complied with 8 of 10 statutory requirements for reporting on its Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs but did not comply with statutory time frame to publish this report or provide a copy to the Secretary of State
- ▶ Department continues to develop Department Orders and processes related to reporting guidelines
- ▶ Legislature revised statute regarding Department reporting requirements

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

28

The Arizona Auditor General makes 3 recommendations to the Department

APPENDIX A

a-1

Program descriptions and inmate enrollment, completions, and noncompletions of major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs by prison and unit

- ▶ Self-improvement
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Treatment
- ▶ At-a-glance view of major program offerings by prison and unit

APPENDIX B

b-1

42-Month Followup of Report 21-118

APPENDIX C	c-1
42-Month Followup of Report 21-119	
APPENDIX D	d-1
24-Month Followup of Report 23-103	
APPENDIX E	e-1
Initial Followup of Report 24-105	
APPENDIX F	f-1
Department’s annual drug and alcohol treatment report	
APPENDIX G	g-1
Scope and methodology	
DEPARTMENT RESPONSE	
TABLES	
▶ Table 1	18
Department enrolled 17,480 inmates in major programs among 3 program categories (self-improvement, education, and treatment) during fiscal year 2024, accounting for 22,962 total unique enrollments and 13,006 completions (Unaudited)	
▶ Table 2	18
Department increased unique major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024, but unique major program completions decreased and unique major program noncompletions increased (Unaudited)	
▶ Table 3	26
Department’s compliance with drug and alcohol treatment programs reporting requirements for fiscal year 2022 report, fiscal year 2023 reports, and 2024 annual reports	

▶ **Table 4**

a-5

Department facilitates various major programs for each prison and unit that houses inmates across multiple custody levels
Fiscal years 2023 and 2024
(Unaudited)

▶ **Table 5**

e-7

Two major reasons—inmate transfer and administrative discharge—accounted for a majority of major program noncompletions in fiscal year 2024, in contrast to fiscal years 2022 and 2023, when we found 3 major reasons for major program noncompletions—inmate transfer, administrative discharge, and canceled program group
(Unaudited)

INTRODUCTION

The Arizona Auditor General has completed its third annual review of the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry’s (Department) compliance with several statutory and Department policy requirements, as required by Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §41-1610.02. The review included assessing the Department’s compliance with statutory requirements related to earned release credit programs, the inmate transition program, and the drug and alcohol treatment programs annual report; the Department’s compliance with its statutory purpose to rehabilitate inmates by reporting information on the number of inmates who enrolled in and completed Department-provided rehabilitative self-improvement and treatment programs; and the Department’s compliance with its own policies regarding industry-recommended reporting guidelines.¹ This report also includes information on the implementation status of recommendations from our 2023 and 2024 annual reviews and 2 previous reports we issued in 2021 as part of the Department’s sunset review.²

Department’s statutory purpose

The Department was created in 1968, and its statutory purpose (see textbox) includes operating prisons, providing rehabilitative programming, and supervising offenders once released into the community (community supervision). The Department operates 9 State prison complexes and contracts for 6 private or privately managed prisons located throughout the State.³ As of May 31, 2025, the Department was responsible for 35,513 inmates in State and private prisons and 5,439 offenders on community supervision.⁴

Department’s statutory purpose

“The Department shall have as its purpose the objective of encompassing the various institutions, facilities, and programs which are now or may become a part of the correctional program of the State, and to provide the supervisory staff and administrative functions at the State level of all matters relating to the institutionalization, rehabilitation, and community supervision functions of all adult offenders.”

Source: A.R.S. §41-1602(B).

Compliance review encompasses various Department operational areas

A.R.S. §41-1610.02 requires us to annually assess the Department’s compliance with statutory and policy requirements for and report information on the following operational areas:

¹ Effective September 24, 2022, Laws 2022, Ch. 327, §1, revised statute to add A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which requires us to annually review the Department’s compliance in these areas. Our report is due on or before September 1 each year.

² See Appendix B through Appendix E, pages b-1 through e-10, for information on the status of recommendations made from all 4 previous reports.

³ The Department did not renew its contract with the vendor operating the private prison in Marana and transferred inmates housed there to other facilities in December 2023.

⁴ Throughout this report, we use the term “inmate” to refer to individuals incarcerated in prison and the term “offender” for individuals who have been released from prison.

► **Assess compliance with statutory requirements for earned release credit programs**

Statute outlines several earned release credit programs that provide a means for inmates to reduce their period of incarceration based on the sentencing statute under which they were convicted and other factors, such as behavior while incarcerated.^{5,6} For example, an inmate can receive 3 days of earned release credit for every 7 days served if they have been convicted of certain drug-related charges. The Department is responsible for accurately identifying, tracking, and releasing inmates according to statutory requirements for each earned release credit program, and Department Orders provide guidance on how Department staff should perform these responsibilities.⁷

See Chapter 1, pages 5 through 8, for our assessment of the Department's compliance with earned release requirements between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024.

► **Assess compliance with statutory requirements related to the inmate transition program**

A.R.S. §31-281 requires the Department to establish a transition program that provides eligible inmates with transition services, such as counseling and case management, for up to 90 days after they are released into the community.⁸ A.R.S. §31-285 requires the Department to release inmates eligible for the transition program 3 months earlier than their next earliest release date. In addition, these 2 statutes establish other Department requirements related to the transition program, including inmate eligibility criteria (see textbox on page 2 of our 2024 annual compliance review for more information on transition program eligibility requirements); Department contracting requirements, such as the requirement to contract with a private or nonprofit entity to administer transition program services; and Department reporting of transition program metrics, such as the number of inmates and the recidivism rate of inmates who receive transition program services. Additionally, A.R.S. §31-281(B)(4) requires that the Department allow victims of inmates in the transition program 20 days to object to an inmate's early release after the Department has mailed notification to the victims of the early release.

See Chapters 2 and 3, pages 9 through 14, for our assessment of the Department's compliance with statutory transition program requirements between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, including statutory victim notification requirements.

► **Assess compliance with the Department's statutory purpose to rehabilitate inmates by reporting the number of inmates who enroll and participate in and**

⁵ A.R.S. §§41-1604.06, 41-1604.07, and 41-1604.10.

⁶ We refer to the administration of the various earned release credit types as earned release credit programs for the purpose of the annual compliance review.

⁷ Department Orders are written instructions to guide uniform administration and operation of the Department and serve a similar function as written policies and procedures. Each Department Order addresses a specific topic, such as inmate classification, security/facility inspections, and inmate programming.

⁸ A.R.S. §31-281(B) outlines the original transition program minimum eligibility requirements that became effective September 18, 2003. The Department refers to these eligibility requirements as the standard transition program. A.R.S. §31-281(E) outlines alternative transition program eligibility requirements that became effective August 3, 2018, for inmates charged with possession or use of marijuana, dangerous drugs, narcotic drugs, or drug paraphernalia. The Department refers to these eligibility requirements as the drug transition program. For reporting purposes, we refer to both sets of eligibility requirements as the transition program.

complete the Department’s rehabilitative self-improvement and treatment programs by institution and a description of each program

As discussed earlier, the Department’s statutory purpose includes rehabilitating inmates/offenders. According to a Department Order related to inmate programming, “[t]he Department recognizes that programs can have a great impact on inmates and offenders to improve their knowledge, skills, and to counter criminal thinking in order that they might have the tools needed to succeed upon release from prison and to assist in reducing recidivism.” The Department offers a variety of self-improvement, education, and treatment programs, such as Changing Offender Behavior, functional literacy, high school equivalency, and substance abuse and sex offender treatment. The Department uses a priority-ranking report, an automated report generated by its inmate management system, the Arizona Correctional Information System (ACIS), that provides a ranked listing by program of inmates with programming needs, to help staff responsible for program enrollment decide which inmates to enroll in available programs.⁹

See Chapters 4 and 5, pages 15 through 22, for information on the Department’s major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs.

▶ Assess compliance with statutory requirements related to an annual drug and alcohol treatment programming report

Pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1604.14, the Department is required to annually produce a report detailing information about the drug and alcohol treatment programs it provides to inmates in prison and offenders on community supervision or parole. The report must include specific information, such as the programs available, the descriptions of the programs, and the cost of the program per offender.

See Chapter 6, pages 23 through 27, and Appendix D, pages d-1 through d-7, for information on the Department’s annual drug and alcohol treatment programming report and status of our recommendations related to the drug and alcohol treatment programming report from our previous annual compliance reviews. Chapter 6 also includes information on the Department’s compliance with various statutory reporting requirements related to the earned release credit report and transition program.

▶ Assess compliance with Department policies regarding industry-recommended reporting guidelines

As discussed in footnote 7 (see page 2), Department Orders serve a similar function to policies and procedures. See Chapter 6, pages 23 through 27, for information on the Department’s efforts to develop and implement Department orders related to reporting guidelines.

⁹ The inmates are ranked in order of priority based on their individual risk and needs scores and remaining time in prison. However, the Department has directed program staff to give highest priority for enrollment in major programs to inmates who need to complete a major program to be fully eligible for drug possession release. According to Department documents, the Department defines major programs as programs facilitated by credentialed staff that have a potential impact on criminogenic factors, for example, procriminal attitudes, school/work failure, and drug or alcohol abuse.

Legislature established Independent Correctional Oversight Office to monitor and report on Department compliance with statutory and Department policy requirements

Effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, established an Independent Correctional Oversight Office (Oversight Office) with key responsibilities, including monitoring confinement conditions established by the Department, providing information about inmates' rights, and investigating and resolving public, inmate, and staff complaints made against Department. This law also repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which required our Office to complete the Department's annual compliance review. Further, the law requires the Oversight Office to complete an annual report on or before December 31 of each year that includes an assessment of the Department's compliance with the areas we have assessed in our 3 annual compliance reviews that we conducted in 2023, 2024, and 2025, such as the earned release credit program, transition program, inmate programming, reporting requirements for the transition program and its drug and alcohol treatment programming report, and its own policies regarding industry-recommended reporting guidelines.¹⁰

Because Laws 2025, Ch. 258, transferred the responsibility of reviewing the Department's compliance with several statutory and Department policy requirements from our Office to the Oversight Office, we will collaborate with the Oversight Office regarding future follow-up work to assess the Department's efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. This may include deferring to the Oversight Office to follow up on some recommendations, while we continue to independently follow up on the remaining recommendations. For the recommendations we will continue to follow up on, including new recommendations we made in this year's annual review, we will assess the Department's efforts to implement those recommendations in summer 2026.

¹⁰ The report shall also include information not required to be included in our annual compliance review, such as the number of complaints received and resolved by the Oversight Office, the number of inmate deaths while the inmate was in custody, and any outstanding or unresolved concerns or recommendations of the Oversight Office.

Department calculated earned release credits for all eligible inmates we reviewed consistent with statute

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with the earned release credit program requirements pursuant to A.R.S. §§41-1604.06, 41-1604.07, and 41-1604.10.¹

Prior years' conclusions: Our 2023 and 2024 annual compliance reviews found the Department did not release on time 1 of 123 inmates and 1 of 80 inmates we reviewed, respectively, because Department staff misapplied an eligibility requirement. We recommended the Department provide periodic staff training on earned release credit program requirements, and as of our 2025 annual compliance review, it was in the process of implementing this recommendation (see Appendix D, page d-3, for more information).

2025 conclusion: Consistent with earned release credit program statutory provisions, the Department correctly determined inmates' length of incarceration and released all 31 inmates we reviewed under various earned release credit programs between August 2024 and November 2024. We did not make any new recommendations as part of this year's review.

¹ Statute also requires us to review the Department's compliance with a statutory reporting requirement related to earned release credits pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P). See Chapter 6, page 24, for information on our 2025 conclusions related to this requirement.

Department required to determine inmates' eligibility for earned release credit programs and release inmates according to their eligibility time frames

As discussed in the Introduction (see pages 1 through 2), statutes establish various earned release credit programs that shorten eligible inmates' periods of incarceration.¹ We were required to review 3 of these programs: drug possession release, truth-in-sentencing, and new code (see textbox on page 6 for more information on these 3 programs, including eligibility requirements and how inmates may earn release credits).^{2,3}

¹ A.R.S. §§41-1604.06, 41-1604.07, and 41-1604.10.

² Statute outlines the statutory requirements for inmates to earn release credits, but the Department has specified the names for the different earned release credit programs.

³ Statute has established 2 other required earned release credit programs for inmates convicted of offenses committed prior to October 1, 1978. We were not directed to review these 2 programs.

Earned release credit programs

Statute has established the following earned release credit programs, which are based on type of offense(s) and when the crime(s) was committed:

- **Drug possession release:** Inmates who have been convicted of 1 of 4 qualifying drug possession or use charges related to marijuana, dangerous drugs, narcotics, or drug paraphernalia; have not previously been convicted of a violent or aggravated felony as defined in A.R.S. §13-706; and successfully complete a drug treatment program or other major self-improvement or education program while imprisoned can earn 3 days of credits for every 7 days served. However, inmates sentenced to serve the full term of imprisonment imposed by the court are not eligible. This earned release credit program went into effect in June 2019 pursuant to Laws 2019, Ch. 310.
- **Truth-in-sentencing:** Inmates who have been convicted of any offense not listed under the drug possession release program and who committed offenses on or after January 1, 1994, are eligible to earn 1 day of credit for every 6 days served. However, inmates sentenced to serve the full term of imprisonment imposed by the court are not eligible. Examples of inmates in our file review who earned truth-in-sentencing release credits included inmates who were convicted of misconduct involving weapons, burglary, and assault.
- **New code:** Inmates who have been convicted of offenses committed between October 1, 1978 and December 31, 1993, and who are parole eligible are eligible to earn new code earned release credits.¹ These inmates may earn either 1 day of credit for every 2 days served or 1 day of credit for every 3 days served and may need to serve a minimum amount of their imposed sentence before earning credits, depending on various stipulations, such as the crime committed and the number of prior convictions. For example, an inmate who was sentenced on a first conviction for an offense other than a dangerous felony offense as defined in A.R.S. §13-105 or one that resulted in a sentence of death or life in prison can earn 1 day of credit for every 2 days served, whereas an inmate who has been defined by law as a repeat or dangerous offender can earn 1 day of credit for every 3 days served.

¹ A.R.S. §41-1604.09 outlines inmate eligibility for parole, which includes inmates who have been convicted of offenses committed before January 1, 1994, or sentenced to life imprisonment for first-degree murder with the possibility of parole after serving a minimum number of years specified in the sentence. The sentencing guidelines, referred to as truth-in-sentencing, eliminated parole for truth-in-sentencing eligible inmates and were established by Laws 1993, Ch. 255, effective December 31, 1993.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Arizona Revised Statutes, Department Orders, and other Department documentation related to earned release credit programs that was the source information from our 2023 annual compliance review.

The Department is required to determine inmates' eligibility for earned release credit programs and has established processes to identify, track, and calculate inmates' earned release credits throughout the inmates' periods of incarceration.⁴ The Department conducts multiple release

⁴ Under some circumstances, an inmate may not be eligible for earned release credits. For example, some criminal code statutes indicate that an inmate convicted of certain crimes is not eligible for earned release credits. Additionally, the Department reported that sometimes, a judge may use their discretion to indicate an inmate is ineligible for earned release credits even though the statute(s) the inmate was convicted under does not prohibit the inmate from earning credits.

calculations for inmates throughout their incarceration to determine and help ensure accurate release dates. For example, the Department calculates inmates' projected release credits they can earn upon entry to prison based on statutory and other sentencing requirements. Inmates may earn credits, up to the original maximum calculated by the Department, throughout their period of incarceration based on days served; however, inmates found guilty of a major disciplinary violation, such as assaulting a Department staff member or possessing dangerous contraband, may lose release credits (for more information on the Department's timeline and process for conducting these calculations, see Chapter 1, page 6, of our 2024 annual compliance review).⁵

Department correctly identified, calculated, and released all 31 inmates we reviewed based on their statutory release eligibility

Building upon our previous reviews of the Department's efforts to correctly release inmates on their statutory release eligibility date, we reviewed a stratified random sample of 31 of 5,066 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, including 20 inmates who were released under earned release credit programs, and 11 inmates who were not released under earned release credit programs.⁶ Our review found the Department accurately calculated and tracked inmates' earned release credits, as applicable, and released all 31 inmates based on their statutory eligibility.

Department has implemented our 2021 recommendation related to the drug possession release earned release credit program

Our 2021 performance audit and sunset review (Report 21-119) recommended the Department continue to work on automating its process for identifying inmates who may qualify for drug possession release and calculating their potential drug possession release dates. Our review of the 31 inmates previously discussed found that the automated process the Department implemented in ACIS accurately identified all 9 inmates who qualified for drug possession release and correctly calculated their potential drug possession release dates.

Department has made progress on, but not yet fully implemented, our recommendation to develop periodic training for staff related to earned release credit program provisions and requirements

Our 2023 annual compliance review (Report 23-103) recommended the Department develop and implement periodic training for Department staff related to earned release credit program provisions and requirements to help ensure eligible inmates are released according to earned release credit requirements and time frames. Our 2024 annual compliance review (Report 24-105) found the Department's time computation staff undergoes initial staff training and testing and holds monthly meetings to address any system updates or issues and questions staff might

⁵ Inmates who lose earned credits may apply to restore these credits during their period of incarceration; however, according to A.R.S. §41-1604.07(D), the Department has discretion over inmates' restoration of credits.

⁶ The 11 inmates in our sample who were not eligible for earned release credits were required to serve the full term of imprisonment imposed by the court.

have regarding earned release credit calculations. Additionally, Department staff had begun developing tutorials for prison facility staff related to time computation topics, including drug possession release and other earned release credit programs.

As of March 2025, we found the Department has continued to make progress on, but has not yet fully implemented this recommendation. Specifically, the Department has developed additional training video tutorials for its staff on various time computation topics, including calculating earned release credits, the transition program, and calculating release credits earned when an inmate was serving time in a local or county jail. The tutorials the Department has developed provide training on the types of offenses that make an inmate eligible for each earned release credit program, requirements for each program, and frequently asked questions. However, although Department staff can directly view the completed tutorials through specific website links, the Department reported that it has not yet created a central repository with all the completed tutorials on its intranet site or determined a schedule for when it will conduct a large-scale training for its staff to view and/or complete the tutorials. Finally, the Department is in the process of placing some of the tutorials on its intranet for inmate accessibility (see Appendix D, pages d-1 through d-7, for information on the Department's status in implementing recommendations from our 2023 annual compliance review related to this issue).

Department complied with transition program eligibility requirements but did not timely release 2 of 20 inmates we reviewed to the transition program and has not fully implemented our previous recommendation related to its process to approve inmate releases to the transition program

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with the inmate transition program established pursuant to A.R.S. §31-281 and the release provisions prescribed in A.R.S. §31-285.¹

Prior years' conclusion: Our 2023 annual compliance review found that in fiscal year 2022, the Department did not release 1 eligible inmate we reviewed to the transition program and did not release 8 of 41 inmates we reviewed 3 months early due to factors within and outside the Department's control. Our 2024 annual compliance review found that in fiscal year 2023, the Department correctly determined inmate eligibility for the transition program for 80 inmates we reviewed, provided evidence to support the provision of transition program services for 4 inmates we reviewed, and notified inmates about the transition program at intake and approximately 6 months before their release. However, the Department did not release 2 of 48 inmates we reviewed to the transition program even though it approved these inmates for the program, and did not release 12 of 48 inmates to the transition program 3 months early due to factors within and outside of the Department's control. We recommended the Department continue to monitor, identify, and address delays in various transition program processes within its control, and as of our 2025 annual compliance review, it has implemented most transition program recommendations but has not fully implemented our recommendation related to its process to timely approve inmates for the transition program (see Appendix E, pages e-3 through e-4, for more information).

2025 conclusion: The Department correctly determined transition program eligibility for all 31 inmates we reviewed. However, the Department untimely released to the transition program 2 of 20 inmates—who entered the Department's custody with 3 months or less remaining to serve on their sentence—because it did not review these inmates within 1 business day, as required by its Department Order.² According to the Department, an increase in the number of potentially eligible inmates for the transition program that require review to determine eligibility likely contributed to these delays. Because we made recommendations in our previous reports that address untimely review, we did not make any new recommendations as part of this year's review.

¹ Statute also requires us to review the Department's compliance with the reporting provisions prescribed in A.R.S. §31-285. See Chapter 6, page 24, for information on our conclusions related to these reporting provisions.

² A third inmate was not timely released to the transition program because this inmate refused to sign the agreement until after their potential release date had passed, thereby delaying their own early release. Once the inmate signed the required documentation, the Department reviewed and approved the inmate within 1 business day and released the inmate within 2 business days of approval.

Department correctly determined transition program eligibility for all 31 inmates we reviewed

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1 (see page 7), we reviewed a stratified random sample of 31 of 5,066 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, for their statutory earned release credit eligibility. We also reviewed the Department's determination of transition program eligibility for these 31 inmates and found that the Department correctly determined that 20 of 31 inmates were eligible for the transition program and 11 of 31 inmates were not eligible for the program.

Department untimely released 2 of 20 eligible inmates we reviewed to the transition program because it did not timely approve their program eligibility, which may lengthen prison stays and increase Department costs

Our review of the 20 inmates who were eligible for the transition program found that the Department untimely released 2 of 20 inmates to the program.¹ Similar to issues we reported in our 2024 annual compliance review, these 2 inmates entered the Department's custody with 3 months or less remaining to serve on their sentence, and the Department did not review these inmates' eligibility within 1 business day of being classified as potentially eligible for the transition program, as required by Department Order 1001 (see Appendix E, pages e-2 through e-4, for information on the Department's status in implementing recommendations from our 2024 annual compliance review related to this issue). Instead, Department staff reviewed these 2 inmates for transition program eligibility 6 and 12 business days, respectively, after the inmates were classified potentially eligible for the transition program.² According to the Department, an increase in the number of potentially eligible inmates for the transition program that require review to determine eligibility likely contributed to these delays. The Department released these 2 inmates to the transition program 13 and 22 days, respectively, after they entered Department custody.

Inmates who are eligible for the transition program but not released 3 months early remain in prison longer than statute requires, delaying their return to the community. The Department also incurs higher costs when inmates' incarceration is unnecessarily extended. For example, based on its fiscal year 2020 per capita report, the Department reported that it paid \$74.77 per day for each incarcerated inmate but only \$11.24 per day for each inmate on community supervision.

Department has implemented our 2021 recommendation related to the drug transition program

Our 2021 Department performance audit and sunset review (Report 21-119) recommended the Department continue to work on automating its process for identifying inmates who may qualify for the drug transition program and calculating their potential drug transition program

¹ A third inmate was not timely released to the transition program. Although provided the opportunity to sign the required transition program agreement prior to their potential release date, this inmate refused to sign the agreement until after their potential release date had passed. Once the inmate signed the required documentation, the Department reviewed and approved the inmate within 1 business day and released the inmate within 2 business days of approval.

² Although we identified 3 additional inmates who the Department did not timely approve for the transition program, this delay in approval did not impact their timely release to the program.

release dates (see Introduction, page 2, footnote 8, for more information on the drug transition program). Our review of the 31 inmates previously discussed found that the automated process in ACIS accurately identified 20 inmates who qualified for the transition program—2 inmates who qualified for the drug transition program and 18 inmates who qualified for the standard transition programs—and correctly calculated their potential transition program release date.

Department has not yet implemented 1 of our recommendations related to processes that may delay inmate transition program releases

Although the Department has implemented most of the recommendations from our 2024 annual compliance review (Report 24-105) related to improving processes that may delay inmate transition program releases, as of March 2025, the Department had not yet fully implemented our recommendation to timely approve inmates for the transition program. Specifically, similar to our 2024 annual compliance review, our 2025 review found that the Department did not approve 5 of 20 inmates for the transition program within the Department required time frames, and as previously discussed, these delays impacted 2 inmates' timely release to the transition program (see Appendix E, pages e-2 through e-4, for information on the Department's status in implementing recommendations from our 2024 annual compliance review related to this issue).

Department timely notified all 3 victims we reviewed of an inmate's early release in accordance with statute, but provided an incorrect notification letter to 1 victim

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with the inmate transition program pertaining to the victim notification requirement specified in A.R.S. §31-281(B)(4).

Prior years' conclusions: Our 2023 annual compliance review found the Department had a process for notifying victims when an inmate was set for release; however, we were unable to test Department compliance with this process because there were no identified victims indicated for the sample of inmates we reviewed. Our 2024 annual compliance review found the Department did not timely notify the victim of 1 of 3 inmates we reviewed. The Department also did not inform victims of inmates released early to the transition program about their 20-day statutory time frame for objecting to an inmate's early release. Additionally, Department Order 1002 was inconsistent with the statutory requirement that an inmate be retained in custody until the 20-day time frame for victim response has ended.

We recommended the Department send notifications to victims at least 20 days prior to an inmate's early release, update its post-conviction letter to include the 20-day time frame for a victim to object to an inmate's early release, and revise Department Order 1002 to include statutorily required time frames. As of our 2025 annual compliance review, it has implemented 1 of these recommendations and made further progress on another but has not yet fully implemented our other recommendations (see Appendix E, pages e-4 through e-5, for more information on the status of these recommendations).

2025 conclusion: Our review of the Department's victim notification process found that although it notified all 3 victims we reviewed within its required time frame, the Department did not inform 1 of these victims about the 20-day time frame to object to an inmate's early release to the transition program because it sent an incorrect letter to this victim rather than its updated letter. Additionally, the Department has not updated Department Order 1002 to be consistent with statute.¹ We did not make any new recommendations as part of this year's review.

¹ See textbox on page 13 for more information on the applicable statute and Department Order 1002.

Statute requires the Department to notify victims of inmates' pending transition program release and provide victims the opportunity to object to early release

Statute requires the Department to notify the victims of crimes inmates committed before they are released early to the transition program and provide victims with the opportunity to object

to the inmate's early release and requires any objection to be made within 20 calendar days after the Department has mailed notice to the victim. Failure to follow these statutory requirements could result in a victim not having the opportunity or sufficient time to object to an inmate's release before the Department releases the inmate. As a result, the Department could release an inmate despite the victim being opposed to the release. Additionally, failure to notify a victim could result in additional trauma or hardship if the victim is unaware of the inmate's release and potentially impact the victim's ability to prepare for the inmate's release. For more information on the statutory requirements and impact on victims, see Chapter 3, pages 15 through 17, of our 2024 annual compliance review.

Applicable statute and order

- A.R.S. §31-281(B)(4) requires the Department to provide 20 days for a victim to object prior to an inmate's release.
- Department Order 1002 states that a victim has 20 days after the Department has mailed a notice to be heard, but does not require a notice be sent 20 days prior to an inmate's release and/or require an inmate to be retained in custody for those 20 days.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Arizona Revised Statutes and Department Orders.

Department notified all 3 victims we reviewed within required statutory time frame, but its notification letter did not inform 1 of 3 victims of 20-day time frame to object to an inmate's early release to the transition program

Department notified the victim for all 3 inmates we reviewed at least 20 days prior to the inmate's release as statutorily required

Our review of a stratified random sample of 3 of 44 inmates who were released early to the transition program between August 2024 and November 2024 and had a victim who requested to be notified, found that the Department sent notification to all 3 victims at least 20 days prior to the inmate's release. The 3 victims did not object to the inmates' early release.

Department has updated its victim notification letter to inform victims of ability/option to object to an inmate's early release; however, the Department did not send this letter to the victim of 1 inmate we reviewed

In response to a recommendation from our 2024 annual compliance review, the Department updated its victim notification letter for the transition program to include information regarding the victim's ability and/or option to object to the inmate's early release, as required by statute. However, our review of victim notification letters for the random stratified sample of 3 of 44 inmates previously discussed found that 1 victim notification letter the Department sent did not include the statutorily required information regarding the victim's ability and/or option to object to the inmate's early release. Department staff sent an incorrect letter instead of the Department's updated letter because, according to the Department, it had not fully trained all applicable staff on its process, including using the updated letter.

Department Order 1002 continues to be inconsistent with transition program statutory notification requirements, which may cause inmates to be released before a victim has the opportunity to object

Our 2024 annual compliance review found that Department Order 1002, which outlines victim notification requirements for the transition program, did not include the statutory requirement that an inmate may only be released once a victim has the opportunity for their objection to be heard.¹ In January 2025, the Department drafted language for Department Order 1002 that includes the statutorily required information and, in June 2025, reported it was in the process of finalizing the updated language but did not have an anticipated approval date. Until it finalizes this updated Department Order, the Department is at risk of releasing inmates to the transition program before victims who have requested to be notified have the full statutorily mandated time period to object to the early release (see Appendix E, page e-5, for more information).

¹ See textbox on page 13 for applicable statute and Department Order.

Department increased unique major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024; however, the number of program completions decreased while the number of program noncompletions increased from fiscal year 2023

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with its statutory purpose prescribed in A.R.S. §41-1602 to provide rehabilitation, and the number of inmates who enroll, participate in, and complete the Department's rehabilitative self-improvement and treatment programs by institution and a description of each program.

Prior years' conclusions: Our 2023 annual compliance review found that approximately 21,000 inmates were enrolled in at least 1 self-improvement, education, and/or treatment program during fiscal year 2022; approximately 54% of these enrollments resulted in a program completion; and approximately 41% resulted in a noncompletion. Similarly, our 2024 annual compliance review found that 16,760 inmates were enrolled in at least 1 self-improvement, education, and/or treatment major program in fiscal year 2023; approximately 60% of these enrollments resulted in a program completion; and approximately 36% resulted in a noncompletion.¹ We recommended the Department continue to monitor major program data, research the causes of noncompletions, and use that information to make changes to its program enrollment policies, guidance, and/or staff trainings. As of our 2025 annual compliance review, the Department has yet to fully implement most of the recommendations from our 2023 and 2024 annual reviews.

2025 conclusion: Consistent with its statutory purpose to provide rehabilitative programming, during fiscal year 2024, the Department enrolled 17,480 inmates in at least 1 major self-improvement, education, and/or treatment program with approximately 57% of unique major program enrollments resulting in a completion. However, although the number of major program enrollments increased as compared to fiscal years 2022 and 2023, the number of program completions decreased by approximately 2% and the number of program noncompletions increased by approximately 15% as compared to fiscal year 2023 program completions and noncompletions. Because we made recommendations in our previous reports that address the factors contributing to program noncompletions and the Department has yet to fully implement these recommendations, we did not make any new recommendations as part of this year's review.

¹ Our 2024 and 2025 annual compliance reviews reviewed Department data for major programs, whereas our 2023 annual compliance review reviewed data for major programs and some nonmajor programs the Department offered. As a result, the program enrollment numbers presented in the 2024 and 2025 reviews are less than the program enrollment numbers presented in the 2023 review. The Department defines major programs as those that are related to key areas of successful reentry and typically require credentialed staff and a standardized and evidence-based curriculum. Completion of these programs can also make an inmate eligible for drug possession release.

Department enrolls inmates in major programs, in accordance with its statutory purposes, based on key factors

As discussed in the Introduction, 1 of the Department's statutory purposes is to rehabilitate adult inmates/ offenders.¹ Additionally, according to a Department Order related to inmate programming, "[t]he Department recognizes that programs can have a great impact on inmates and offenders to improve their knowledge, skills, and to counter criminal thinking in order that they might have the tools needed to succeed upon release from prison and to assist in reducing recidivism." Consistent with this Department order and its statutory purpose to rehabilitate adult inmates, the Department enrolls inmates in major programs based on various factors such as an inmate's risk for recidivism, identified need for the program, and eligibility for drug possession release; and prioritizes inmates closest to release for enrollment in these programs (see Chapter 1, pages 5 through 8, for more information on drug possession release).² These major programs consist of 3 programming categories—self-improvement, education, and treatment (see Appendix A, pages a-1 through a-9, for a description of each major program and enrollment information by program, prison, and prison unit).³

The Department enrolled 17,480 inmates into major programs in fiscal year 2024, accounting for 22,962 unique major program enrollments and an increase in enrollments from fiscal years 2022 and 2023, but the number of program completions decreased and the number of noncompletions increased as compared to fiscal year 2023

Department had 22,962 unique major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024, an increase from fiscal years 2022 and 2023

During fiscal year 2024, there were 22,962 unique major program enrollments from 17,480 inmates across the Department's major programs.⁴ This total represented an increase of 924 major program enrollments, or more than 4%, from fiscal year 2023, and an increase of 4,834 enrollments, or approximately 27%, as compared to fiscal year 2022 enrollments.⁵

¹ A.R.S. §41-1602(B).

² In addition to major programs, the Department offers nonmajor programs that may be facilitated by volunteers, community partners, or inmates rather than certified staff; enrollment may be voluntary and done in an inmate's leisure time; and completion of these programs, along with other required criteria, do not make an inmate eligible for drug possession release earned release credits.

³ Department Order 1002, Attachment E, includes a list of major programs. Additionally, the Department began offering Outpatient Treatment for Substance Use Disorder and Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Substance Use Disorder in October 2023 (see Appendix A, pages a-3 through a-4, for descriptions of these major programs). Although not specified in Department Order 1002, the Department reported these programs are considered major programs as of February 1, 2024, and we included all enrollments in these 2 programs that ended in a completion, noncompletion, or were still participating as of February 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024, as part of our review.

⁴ The term "unique major program enrollments" is used to describe the total count of unique major program enrollments and excludes inmate re-enrollments for the same major program.

⁵ Our 2023 annual compliance review found that nearly 21,000 inmates accounted for a total of approximately 33,500 unique program enrollments across all major and nonmajor programs within these 3 key program categories during fiscal year 2022. Excluding nonmajor programs in fiscal year 2022, the data consisted of 14,266 inmates that accounted for a total of 18,128 unique major program enrollments.

Department had 13,006 major program completions in fiscal year 2024, a decrease of approximately 2% from fiscal year 2023, and 9,015 major program noncompletions in fiscal year 2024, an increase of approximately 15% from fiscal year 2023

As shown in Table 1 on page 18, the 22,962 unique major program enrollments resulted in 13,006 major program completions in fiscal year 2024.⁶ On average across all 3 major program categories, approximately 57% of inmate enrollments resulted in an inmate eventually completing their program. However, as shown in Table 2 on page 18, unlike fiscal year 2023, when program completions increased from the previous fiscal year, during fiscal year 2024, program completions decreased by 249, or approximately 2%, as compared to fiscal year 2023. The Department attributed the decrease in completions to an increase in inmate transfers and a lack of instructors available to complete the program cycle.⁷

Additionally, as shown in Table 1 on page 18, the 22,962 unique major program enrollments resulted in 9,015 program noncompletions during fiscal year 2024. On average across all 3 major program categories, approximately 39% of inmate enrollments resulted in the inmate not completing the program. As shown in Table 2 on page 18, this represents an increase of 1,200 program noncompletions, or approximately 15%, as compared to fiscal year 2023 program noncompletions. In addition to the factors previously cited for the decrease in program completions, the fiscal year 2024 increase in unique major program enrollments might also result in an increase in the total number of noncompletions. Specifically, as reported in our 2024 annual compliance review and above, for fiscal years 2022 through 2024, the percentage of noncompletions has ranged from 35% to 40% of all major program enrollments.⁸ Therefore, using the approximate 39% fiscal year 2024 rate of noncompletions, the 924 increase in major program enrollments may have resulted in approximately 360 of the 1,200 additional noncompletions.

Regardless of whether a result of a program noncompletion or a decrease in program completions, when inmates do not complete a major program, they may not receive the intended benefits.

⁶ The number of completions, noncompletions, and inmates still participating in a major program reflect the best outcome achieved by an inmate, regardless of the number of times an inmate was enrolled in the program. For example, the 13,006 total completions include 1,202 completions that resulted from the Department re-enrolling an inmate in a program. Additionally, these enrollments resulted in 941 inmates still participating in the major program as of November 30, 2024.

⁷ An inmate may be transferred to a different prison/prison unit due to reasons including medical issues, changes in an inmate's custody level, or an inmate's request for protective custody.

⁸ We identified approximately 40%, 35%, and 39% of all major program enrollments resulted in a noncompletion for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024, respectively.

Table 1

Department enrolled 17,480 inmates in major programs among 3 program categories (self-improvement, education, and treatment) during fiscal year 2024, accounting for 22,962 total unique enrollments and 13,006 completions¹

(Unaudited)

Program category	Unique enrollments			Total
	Completions	Noncompletions	Participating	
Self-improvement	5,450	1,762	55	7,267
Education	5,631	6,275	811	12,717
Treatment	1,925	978	75	2,978
Total	13,006	9,015	941	22,962
Percent of total	56.6%	39.3%	4.1%	100%

¹ After removing duplicates and other errors from the data, this table presents the count of total unique major program enrollments by inmates into 1 or more of 3 major program categories in fiscal year 2024; and reflects whether an inmate either eventually completed the program or did not complete the program after 1 or multiple attempts or were still participating in a program as of November 30, 2024.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Department-provided data related to major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs for fiscal year 2024 enrollments, and participation and completion status as of November 30, 2024.

Table 2

Department increased unique major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024, but unique major program completions decreased and unique major program noncompletions increased¹

(Unaudited)

Measure	FY 2022 ²	FY 2023		FY 2024	
Completions	9,843	13,255	↑	13,006	↓
Noncompletions	7,417	7,815	↑	9,015	↑
Participating	868	968	↑	941	↓
Total unique enrollments	18,128	22,038	↑	22,962	↑

↑ Increase from prior year ↓ Decrease from prior year

¹ After removing duplicates and other data errors, this table presents the outcome of unique major program enrollments, only counting whether an inmate either eventually completed a program or did not complete the program after 1 or multiple attempts, or were still participating as of November 30, 2024, for fiscal year 2024; November 30, 2023, for fiscal year 2023; and November 30, 2022, for fiscal year 2022.

² This table includes only major program data for fiscal year 2022, which is not comparable with the data we reported in our 2023 annual compliance review because our 2023 annual compliance review also reported data for some nonmajor programs. We determined to focus only on major programs for our 2024 and 2025 annual compliance reviews because they are programs the Department identifies as addressing key areas for successful inmate reentry. Any comparisons to fiscal year 2022 throughout this report utilized only fiscal year 2022 major program data.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Department-provided data related to major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs for fiscal year 2024, fiscal year 2023, and fiscal year 2022 enrollments, and participation and completion status as of November 30, 2024, November 30, 2023, and November 30, 2022, respectively.

Department has made progress toward implementing recommendations related to monitoring and updating its enrollment guidance to help reduce major program noncompletions but has not fully implemented recommendations we made in multiple prior reviews

Our 2021 performance audit (Report 21-118) and 2023 and 2024 annual compliance reviews (Reports 23-103 and 24-105) found that many inmate enrollments in the Department's self-improvement, education, and treatment programs ended in noncompletions. In our 2021 and 2024 reports, we made several recommendations to the Department that, if fully implemented, should help decrease the number of program noncompletions.⁹ These include recommendations related to monitoring major program enrollment, completion, and noncompletion information; reasons for noncompletions, such as inmate transfers or whether qualified program instructors complete teaching a program; and using this information to make changes, as needed, to its major program enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings to help reduce noncompletions. As of our 2025 annual compliance review, although the Department continues to make progress toward implementing most of these recommendations, it has not yet fully done so. For example, the Department continues to update Department Orders and ACIS processes, such as revising its inmate transfer process and making revisions to ACIS to allow for more accurate programming enrollment information, and needs to take additional steps to assess and address reasons for noncompletions. Further, the Department did not provide documentation of its reviews of major program noncompletions across prisons/prison units. Because the Department has not fully implemented the recommendations we previously made and they address the identified causes for major program noncompletions in this report, we did not make any new recommendations (see Appendix B, pages b-1 through b-9, and Appendix E, pages e-5 through e-10, for more information).

⁹ We did not make any recommendations about major program noncompletions in our 2023 annual compliance review.

Department failed to enter postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS for approximately 18 months and lacks a documented process for doing so, increasing the risk that it does not release some inmates early as required by statute

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with its statutory purpose prescribed in A.R.S. §41-1602 to provide rehabilitation, and the number of inmates who enroll, participate in, and complete the Department's rehabilitative self-improvement and treatment programs by institution and a description of each program.

2025 conclusion: As discussed in Chapter 4 (see pages 15 through 19), we reviewed the Department's inmate programming data to calculate the number of inmates who enrolled and participated in and completed the Department's rehabilitative self-improvement and treatment programs, including education programs, in fiscal year 2024. During this review, we did not identify any inmate enrollments in postsecondary education programs in the data. This lack of enrollments was contrary to our review of the Department's fiscal year 2023 programming data conducted during our 2024 annual compliance review, which identified 120 inmate enrollments in postsecondary education programs. After bringing this issue to the Department's attention, the Department reported that 85 inmates completed a postsecondary education program in fiscal year 2024, but this information had not been entered into ACIS because it lacks a documented process for doing so.

Completing a major program, such as a postsecondary education program, helps to qualify an eligible inmate for drug possession release, an early release program. The Department reported reviewing the 85 inmates and determining their eligibility for drug possession release was not affected because the inmate had either completed a different major program or was not eligible for drug possession release. Our review of a judgmental sample of 5 of 85 inmates confirmed that none of these 5 inmates' eligibility for drug possession release was affected by the Department's failure to enter program completions into ACIS. However, absent a documented process for ensuring its staff enter postsecondary education information into ACIS, the Department is at risk that some inmates do not receive credit for program completion, resulting in not being released early in accordance with statute. We made 3 recommendations to the Department to help ensure that postsecondary education program completion information is accurately entered into ACIS.

Department failed to enter postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS between September 2023 and February 2025, increasing the risk of releasing inmates eligible for drug possession release late

As part of our review to address the statutory requirement related to the Department's provision of rehabilitative programs, we reviewed the Department's fiscal year 2024 major programming enrollment data and found that none of the 22,962 unique major program enrollments included a postsecondary education program enrollment.¹ In contrast, the Department's fiscal year 2023 programming data included 120 total enrollments and 89 completions in postsecondary education programs among its 22,038 unique major program enrollments (see Appendix A, pages a-20 through a-22, of our 2024 annual compliance review for a list of these enrollments by prison unit). After we brought this issue to the Department's attention in February 2025, it reported that 85 inmates had enrolled in and completed a postsecondary education program in fiscal year 2024 but that its staff had not entered these enrollments and completions into ACIS.

The Department's failure to enter postsecondary education completion information into ACIS in a timely manner potentially placed some inmates at risk for remaining in prison longer than statute requires, delaying their return to the community. Specifically, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see textbox on page 6), an inmate must enroll in and complete a major program to be eligible for early release under the drug possession earned release program, and the Department considers postsecondary education as a major program.

As of February 2025, according to the Department, it determined that all 85 affected inmates who completed a postsecondary education program did not have their release delayed because these inmates were either ineligible for drug possession release or had completed a different major program during their current incarceration, qualifying them for drug possession release. Our review of a judgmental sample of 5 of 85 inmates who were at high risk of being impacted by the Department's failure to timely enter completion information found that all 5 inmates had completed another major program, qualifying them for drug possession release, and the Department correctly calculated their release dates.² However, if the Department untimely enters postsecondary education completion data in the future, it is at risk that some inmates may not be released early in accordance with statute and thus remain in prison longer than required.

Department lacks a documented process for entering postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS

The Department expects its staff to enter all postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS; however, it lacks a documented process for timely collecting and entering into ACIS postsecondary education data received from the colleges that provide postsecondary education to inmates and defined roles and responsibilities for doing so, which likely contributed to its failure to enter this data. Specifically, our review found that Department staff entered fiscal

¹ The Department works with various colleges to provide postsecondary education programs to inmates, including Ashland University, Central Arizona College, and Rio Salado College.

² For the 85 inmates potentially affected by the error, the 5 inmates we reviewed were at higher risk for being affected by the Department's error because they would have been potentially eligible for drug possession release the soonest.

year 2023 postsecondary education enrollment and completion data between September 2022 and September 2023 but did not enter any postsecondary education data from October 2023 to February 2025. The Department attributed the gaps in entering the data to delays in assigning the function to a new staff member after the staff member who previously performed the function was promoted in September 2022.

Recommendations to the Department

Develop and implement documented processes and/or guidance that:

1. Include steps and time frames for collecting and accurately entering all postsecondary education program data and specify roles and responsibilities for these steps.
2. Require a risk-based supervisory review of postsecondary education data entry to ensure data is timely entered.
3. Enter all postsecondary education program data into ACIS, including data after September 2023, as required by its documented processes and/or guidance.

Department response: As outlined in its [response](#), the Department agrees with the finding and will implement the recommendations.

Department complied with all statutory requirements for its earned release credit program report but did not comply with all statutory requirements for the transition program and drug and alcohol treatment programs reports

Statutory requirement: Review the Department's compliance with earned release credit program reporting requirements pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1604.07; transition program reporting requirements pursuant to A.R.S. §§31-281 and 31-285; drug and alcohol treatment programs reporting requirements pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1604.14; and its own policies regarding industry recommended reporting guidelines.

Prior years' conclusions: Our 2023 annual compliance review found the Department had not fully complied with statutory requirements for reporting on the earned release credit programs, transition program, and drug and alcohol treatment programs. Our 2024 annual compliance review found that the Department's earned release credit programs report partially complied with statutory requirements; its transition program reports complied with statutory requirements but were not distributed within statutory time frames; and its drug and alcohol treatment programming report complied with all but 1 statutory requirement. Additionally, the Department had developed a process for reviewing and publishing various reports, including its statutorily required reports, and had begun developing a procedure related to external reporting guidelines.

We recommended the Department develop a process to compile and report all required earned release credit information, and as of our 2025 annual compliance review, it had implemented this recommendation (see Appendix D, pages d-3 through d-4, for more information). Additionally, we recommended the Department comply with all reporting requirements for the transition program and drug and alcohol treatment program report and implement Department Orders related to reporting guidelines, but as of our 2025 annual compliance review, it had not yet implemented these recommendations (see Appendix D, pages d-6 through d-7, for more information). Finally, we recommended the Legislature consider revising statute to specify how and/or to whom the Department should post information related to its reports; as of our 2025 annual compliance review, Laws 2025, Ch. 10, allows the Department to post this information on its website (see Appendix D, pages d-2 through d-3, for more information).

2025 conclusion: The Department's quarterly earned release credit program reports issued in the third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2024 complied with all statutory requirements. However, its transition program reports issued in July 2024 and September 2024, respectively, complied with all but 1 statutory requirement—they were not distributed to the Arizona Secretary of State, as required, and its drug and alcohol treatment programs report issued in February 2025 complied with all but 2 statutory requirements—it was not published by December 1 or distributed to the Arizona Secretary of State, as required. We did not make any new recommendations as part of this year's review.

Department earned release credit program report included all statutorily required information

A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P) requires the Department to report quarterly and annually on the earned release credit program and other related information, including data related to drug possession earned release credits and the transition program. Our review of the Department's quarterly earned release credit reports for the third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2024 found that these reports included all statutorily required information. Additionally, our review of the Department's fiscal year 2024 annual report found that this report included all statutorily required information.

Department's fiscal year 2024 transition program reports included all statutorily required information but were not distributed to all required parties

A.R.S. §31-281(D) requires the Department to submit an annual report on or before July 31 to the Governor, President of the Arizona Senate, Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, and Secretary of State that includes information such as the number of inmates who received transition program services and their recidivism rate. In addition, A.R.S. §31-285(B) requires the Department to submit an annual report on or before September 30 to the previously listed individuals and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee Director that includes information on cost reductions to the Department resulting from inmates' early release to the transition program and the number of participants who did not receive an early release under the transition program. Our review of the Department's fiscal year 2024 transition program reports found that they included all statutory required information and were issued in July 2024 and September 2024, prior to their respective statutory deadlines. The Department submitted both reports to the Governor, the President of the Arizona Senate, and the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives. However, contrary to statute, the Department did not submit either report to the Arizona Secretary of State.¹ Additionally, the Department submitted the cost reductions annual report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee Director in October 2024, 28 days after the statutory deadline. According to the Department, it did not timely submit these reports to the Secretary of State or Joint Legislative Budget Committee Director due to a vacancy in the position responsible for report distribution.

Department complied with 8 of 10 statutory requirements for reporting on its Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs but did not comply with statutory time frame to publish this report or provide a copy to the Secretary of State

Statute requires the Department to annually report on or before December 1, specific information to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Governor, and the Secretary of State regarding its drug and alcohol treatment programs provided to inmates in prison and offenders on community supervision.² Our review of the Department's 2024 annual report found that it complied with 8 of 10 statutory requirements (see Table 3 on pages 26 through

¹ After we brought the Department's omission to its attention, the Department reported it provided the transition program reports to the Secretary of State in April 2025.

² A.R.S. §41-1604.14.

27). This included providing information related to the total cost per offender for each program—information that it did not include in its 2023 annual report. However, the Department did not issue this report by December 1 as statutorily required and instead issued the report in February 2025, more than 2 months after the statutory deadline. Additionally, the Department did not distribute the report to the Arizona Secretary of State, as statutorily required.³ The Department reported that the delay in issuing the report and not distributing the report to the Secretary of State resulted from a lack of staff availability to review the report, including report revisions, prior to issuing it. Following this delay, the Department developed a new process to improve its compliance with the statutory deadline for the report by providing automated notifications to staff responsible for the review, completion, and distribution of the report (see below for more information on this new process).

Additionally, although the Department's 2024 annual drug and alcohol treatment program report includes data and information required by statute for the previous 12 months, the report lacks a publication date or effective date of the data cited and included. Without this information, stakeholders may not be able to place the data and associated results in the appropriate perspective, including comparing the data and associated results to prior data and results.⁴ Because our 2023 annual compliance review included a recommendation that the Department ensure that its annual drug and alcohol treatment program report comply with statutory requirements, and the Department is in the process of implementing this recommendation, we did not make any new recommendations in this report (see Appendix D, page d-7).

Department continues to develop Department Orders and processes related to reporting guidelines

In July 2024, after we published our 2024 annual compliance review, the Department reported that it developed and began using a new report tracking program. This tracking program provides Department staff with information related to each report the Department is required to produce, including the applicable statutory requirements for each report, how often each report is required to be published, and the number of days until the next publishing deadline. Additionally, in November 2024, the Department updated the tracking program to provide deadline notifications to staff responsible for key report processing steps. Further, the Department has developed draft language for Department Order 105 that establishes responsible parties and time frames for completing the development of and reviewing reports and incorporates the new tracking program process, including deadline notification time frames to responsible parties. According to the Department, as of April 2025, this draft language is under review; however, it did not provide an expected approval date for the Department Order.

³ Similar to the transition program reports, after we brought the Department's omission to its attention, the Department reported it provided the drug and alcohol treatment program report to the Secretary of State in April 2025.

⁴ After we asked the Department about the reporting time frame, it indicated that the 2024 annual report included data from December 1, 2023 through November 30, 2024, which represents a different time frame than what is presented in its fiscal year 2023 report, which covered July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

Table 3

Department's compliance with drug and alcohol treatment programs reporting requirements for fiscal year 2022 report, fiscal year 2023 reports, and 2024 annual reports¹

Statutory requirement	Annual report compliance		
	2022	2023	2024
The cost per offender for each drug and alcohol treatment program	✗	⚠️ ²	✓
The number of offenders who received services over the previous 12 months	✗	✓	✓
A comparison of the drug or alcohol treatment programs offered to offenders in a department facility, a contracted private prison, or on community supervision or parole	✗	✓	✓
Report due on or before December 1 of each year	✗	✓	✗
A description of each drug and alcohol treatment program	⚠️	✓	✓
The number of offenders currently receiving services from a drug and alcohol treatment program	⚠️	✓	✓
A list of all drug or alcohol treatment programs available to offenders who are under the Department's jurisdiction in prison or on community supervision	✓	✓	✓
The source of monies used for each drug and alcohol treatment program	✓	✓	✓
The name of the program provider for each drug or alcohol treatment program	✓	✓	✓
Report submitted to the following 4 positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Governor ▶ President of the Senate ▶ Speaker of the House of Representatives ▶ Secretary of State 	✓	✓	⚠️ ³



Noncompliant



Partially compliant



Compliant

Table 3 continued

- ¹ For the requirements marked as compliant, we assessed whether the Department included the necessary information in the reports, not the accuracy of the information.
- ² The Department's fiscal year 2023 report included information on "cost per treatment hour." Additional information is needed to reflect the total cost per offender, such as an average cost per offender or range of costs for offenders.
- ³ The Department submitted its fiscal year 2024 report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, but did not submit it to the Secretary of State until April 2025, after we brought this to its attention.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Department's compliance with its fiscal year 2022 "Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs Annual Report," the Department-provided fiscal year 2023 "Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs Annual Report," and the Department-provided 2024 "Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs Annual Report" and A.R.S. §41-1604.14.

Legislature revised statute regarding Department reporting requirements

Our 2023 annual compliance review (Report 23-103) recommended the Legislature revise statute to specify how and/or to whom the Department should report or otherwise post or publish information to comply with the earned release credit reporting requirements in A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P). Effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 10, revised A.R.S. §41-1603.01 to authorize the Department to post information on its website for all statutorily required reports, forms, plans, and summaries, and to state that posting this information shall be treated as if the Department submitted the report, form, plan, or summary to the relevant entity.⁵ As of March 2025, the Department has posted the report required by A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P) on its website a total of 7 times between fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2025 (see Appendix D, pages d-2 through d-3, for more information on the reports we reviewed).

⁵ The legislation also revised A.R.S. §41-1603.01 to require the Department director to notify the relevant entities that the information has been posted on the Department's website.

The Arizona Auditor General makes 3 recommendations to the Department

Click on a finding, recommendation, or its page number to the right to go directly to that finding or recommendation in the report.

Recommendations to the Department

CHAPTER 5	20
Develop and implement documented processes and/or guidance that:	
1. Include steps and time frames for collecting and accurately entering all postsecondary education program data and specify roles and responsibilities for these steps.	22
2. Require a risk-based supervisory review of postsecondary education data entry to ensure data is timely entered.	22
3. Enter all postsecondary education program data into ACIS, including data after September 2023, as required by its documented processes and/or guidance.	22

Program descriptions and inmate enrollment, completions, and noncompletions of major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs by prison and unit

This appendix includes 17 major program descriptions and an at-a-glance table showing enrollments in these major programs at each prison and unit during fiscal year 2024.¹ In fiscal year 2024, various prisons and/or units, including both private and State prisons and units, did not provide some major programs, and as such, enrollment data is not included in the table for these prisons or units.

Self-improvement

Changing Offender Behavior

Changing Offender Behavior is an evidence-based program taught by certified correctional officers that uses cognitive restructuring to address inmates’ procriminal behaviors.² Cognitive restructuring is a self-improvement technique that teaches inmates how to examine and challenge their thought patterns and beliefs that lead them to act in antisocial ways. The Department recommends this program for all inmates before their release from prison. This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 20 sessions, which the Department reports should take between 10 to 12 weeks.

Fire crew training certification

The Department facilitates a fire crew training certification program that allows inmates to learn wildland fire management through the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management. Inmates are able to participate in this certification program while working on a wildland fire crew. This program is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of a firefighter training course as well as an introduction to wildland fire behavior course.

Go Further

Go Further is a major program offered at the Red Rock Correctional Center and La Palma Correctional Center that aims to address potential barriers to reentry such as educational needs, substance use disorders, and life skills needs. This major program meets twice a week for 1.5 hours per session and is 19 weeks long.

¹ Although our 2024 annual compliance review included 16 tables outlining the number of total enrollments, completions, and noncompletions for each major program and prison unit, this appendix includes 1 table providing an at-a-glance view of which programs had enrollments at a particular unit because we are presenting only information for prisons that indicated an enrollment in a major program during fiscal year 2024.

² The Department uses correctional officer IIIs to teach applicable programming, but not all of them are certified to teach Changing Offender Behavior. Throughout this appendix, correctional officer means correction officer III.

Impact on Crime Victims

Impact on Crime Victims is a program taught by correctional officers and volunteers who are victims of crime to teach inmates the impact that their crimes have had on their victims. It is a combination of educational classes conducted by Department staff and presentations from crime victims. The Department recommends this program for inmates identified with relevant risks and needs in the priority ranking report (see Introduction, page 3, for more information). This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 10 sessions.

Education

Functional Literacy

Functional Literacy is a program taught by certified instructors to help inmates achieve an eighth-grade literacy standard in reading, writing, and mathematics. The Department is statutorily required to offer this program to inmates who do not meet the functional literacy standard based on academic assessments conducted upon admission to prison.³ This program is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release; assigned inmates must participate in the program until they achieve the mastery standard.

General Education Development (GED)

The GED program is taught by certified instructors to help inmates who have not received a high school diploma to prepare for a high school equivalency test. The Department is statutorily required to offer this program to inmates who are responsible for the support of a dependent child(ren) receiving public assistance.⁴ This program is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release; assigned inmates participate in the program until they successfully pass the high school equivalency test, but inmates are not prevented from being released to community supervision without a GED.

High School Diploma

The High School Diploma program is taught by certified academic teachers to provide inmates with high school programming for completion of all core curriculum coursework aligned to the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards. The Department offers this program to inmates who have not received a high school equivalency certificate or diploma.⁵ This program is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release. Assigned inmates must participate in high school education until they meet the graduation requirements or reach 18 years of age (22 years of age with disability), whichever comes first.

³ A.R.S. §31-229.02 states that inmates cannot be released to community supervision unless they achieve functional literacy at an eighth-grade level or serve their full term of imprisonment, whichever occurs first. However, this does not apply to inmates eligible for drug possession release per A.R.S. §41-1604.07(F)(5), who can be released without achieving functional literacy.

⁴ In accordance with A.R.S. §31-229.01(A), any eligible inmate who has been reported to the Department as a person responsible for the support of a dependent child(ren) receiving public assistance according to Title 46, Ch. 2, Article 5, and has not yet received a high school diploma shall participate in educational instruction to continue the inmate's basic education to the degree of passing a general equivalency diploma test or an equivalency test approved by the State Board of Education.

⁵ Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-1372(A), the Department is statutorily required to provide educational services to inmates under 18 (minors) or inmates under 22 with an educational disability.

Postsecondary degrees

The Department promotes postsecondary education for inmates by providing guidance and connecting them with college site directors who assist with enrollment and support throughout their academic journey. Inmates can pursue associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees through a range of flexible learning options, including distance learning with accredited universities, remote tablet-based instruction through Ashland University, a hybrid of in-person and tablet learning with Central Arizona College, and in-person or laptop-based coursework through Rio Salado College.

Career Technical Education (CTE)

CTE is a series of vocational programs taught by certified teachers contracted through several of the State's community colleges to provide inmates opportunities to gain marketable employment skills, which may assist them in obtaining work while incarcerated and after release. CTE courses are a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on skills learning, and application. The Department recommends these programs for inmates who are functionally literate but have no identifiable work or employment skills. These programs are major programs that make an inmate eligible for drug possession release and range from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the program. There are more than 20 different classes offered in a variety of trades, including welding, construction trades, computer technology, and automotive repair.⁶

Treatment

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) treatment

The DUI program is taught by licensed counselors and provides inmates with treatment related to alcohol and drug abuse. This program incorporates evidence-based curricula using a cognitive behavioral therapy treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. This major program consists of 72 hours of treatment.

Outpatient Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

Outpatient Treatment programming is provided by substance abuse counselors for inmates to address their addiction issues and learn to live drug-free, prosocial lifestyles. This program incorporates evidence-based curricula using a cognitive behavioral treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. Clients will complete 15 hours of treatment, meeting once a week for 1 hour per session for 15 weeks.

Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

The Intensive Outpatient Treatment program is provided by substance abuse counselors for inmates to address issues in lifestyle areas that may have been neglected during addiction.

⁶ Inmates were enrolled in 25 different CTE programs in fiscal year 2024, including Automotive Tech—Basic, Automotive Tech—Intermediate, Automotive Tech—Advanced, Building Trades, Business Technology, Carpentry—General, Carpentry—Framing, Commercial Driver's License Class A, Computer Coding Full Stack, Computer Tech—Basic, Construction Tech—Basic, Construction Electric—Basic, Construction Electric—Intermediate, Construction—General, Culinary Arts, Food Preparation, Horticulture, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)—Basic, HVAC—Intermediate, HVAC—Advanced, Major Appliance Repair, Masonry, Plumbing, Quality Customer Services, and Welding.

This program incorporates research-based, flexible, practical, and user-friendly substance abuse treatment curricula using a cognitive behavioral treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. Clients will complete 100 hours of treatment, meeting 4 times a week for 2 hours per session for 3 months.

Moderate Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

The Moderate Treatment program is provided by substance abuse counselors for inmates to address their addiction issues and learn to live drug-free, prosocial lifestyles. This program incorporates evidence-based curricula using a cognitive behavioral therapy treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 3 to 6 months of treatment.

Intensive Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

The Intensive Treatment program is provided by substance abuse counselors for inmates to address their addiction issues and learn to live drug-free, prosocial lifestyles. This program incorporates evidence-based curricula using a cognitive behavioral treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 6 to 12 months of treatment.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)

The RSAT Program is a modified therapeutic community program only available at the Lewis and Tucson State prisons provided by licensed substance abuse counselors for inmates to receive medication-assisted treatment, in-reach services, job-readiness services, and peer support services. The goal of this program is for inmates to address their addiction issues and learn to live drug-free, prosocial lifestyles. This program incorporates evidence-based curricula using a cognitive behavioral therapy treatment approach. The Department recommends this program for inmates according to need, time left to serve, and risk for recidivism. This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and is a 6-month program.

Sex Offender Education and Treatment—Year 1

This program provides evidence-based treatment provided by licensed counselors and trained staff to assist inmates in managing sexually exploitative behavior. The staff are trained in therapy techniques, behavior analysis, safety considerations, and ethical responsibilities, and the goal is to reduce the risk of inmates reoffending. The Department recommends this program for inmates with a sexual offense history. This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 12 months of treatment.

Sex Offender Education and Treatment—Year 2

This program is a continuation of the program described in Year 1 (see above). This is a major program that makes an inmate eligible for drug possession release and consists of 6 to 12 months of additional active treatment after 12 months of Year 1 programming is completed.

At-a-glance view of major program offerings by prison and unit

The table below lists the major programs offered at each prison unit for fiscal years 2023 and 2024, including indicating whether a program had enrollments in both years, only 1 of the 2 fiscal years, or neither fiscal year. As a result of the inmates' custody levels and the controlled movement within a unit, program offerings may vary.⁷ Additionally, the Department reported that some units with enrollments in a specific program in fiscal year 2023 did not have a program enrollment during fiscal year 2024 because of various reasons, including not having a teacher to facilitate the program, no eligible inmates, or providing similar services through a different program.

Table 4

Department facilitates various major programs for each prison and unit that houses inmates across multiple custody levels¹

Fiscal years 2023 and 2024

(Unaudited)

Prison	Unit	Custody level	Self-improvement			Education						Treatment						
			Changing Offender Behavior	Go Further	Impact on Crime Victims	Functional Literacy	GED	High School	Postsecondary degrees ²	Fire crew training	CTE ³	DUI	Outpatient	Intensive Outpatient	Moderate	Intensive	RSAT	Sex Offender—Year 1
Private prisons																		
CACF	Florence	Med	→			→	→				→						→	→
Florence West	Florence West	Min	→			→	→											
Kingman	Cerbat	Min	→		↓	→	→				→	→		→	↑			
	Huachuca	Med	→		↑	→	→				→			→				

□ No enrollments in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

→ Enrollments in both fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024.

↓ Enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but not fiscal year 2024.

↑ No enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but enrollments in fiscal year 2024.

⁷ According to the Department Order 801, the Department classifies inmates according to their risk level to the public and staff and level of controlled movement. Specifically, Minimum (Min) custody are inmates with a low risk. Medium (Med) custody are inmates with a moderate risk. Close (CIs) custody are inmates with a high risk. Maximum (Max) custody are inmates with the highest risk. The Department houses inmates with a similar classification within a unit that meets or exceeds the inmate's custody level to ensure the safety and security of persons, the institution, and the community.

Table 4 continued

Prison	Unit	Custody level	Self-improvement			Education						Treatment							
			Changing Offender Behavior	Go Further	Impact on Crime Victims	Functional Literacy	GED	High School	Postsecondary degrees ²	Fire crew training	CTE ³	DUI	Outpatient	Intensive Outpatient	Moderate	Intensive	RSAT	Sex Offender—Year 1	Sex Offender—Year 2
La Palma	La Palma	Cls	→	→	→	→	→				→				↑	↑			
Marana	Marana	Min ⁴	→		↓	→	→				→				→	→			
Phoenix West	Phoenix West	Min	→			→	→					→			→				
Red Rock	Red Rock	Med	→	→	→	→	→				→				→	→			
State prisons																			
Douglas	Eggers	Min	→			→	→			→	↓			↑					
	Gila	Min	→			→	→	→			→			↑	↓				
	Mohave	Med	→			→	→	→			↓			↑	→				
Eyman	Browning	Max	→			→	↑	→											
	Cook	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑	↑	→				
	Meadows	Med	→			→	→	→			→				→				
Eyman cont'd	Rynning	Cls	→			→	→	→							→				
	SMU-1	Max	→			↓	↓	↓							↓				
	South	Med	→			→	→	→			↑								
Lewis	Bachman	Min	↑			→	→	→			→				↓		→		
	Barchey	Med	→			→	→	→			→				↓				
	Buckley	Cls	→			→	→	→					↑		→				

No enrollments in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.



Enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but not fiscal year 2024.



Enrollments in both fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024.



No enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but enrollments in fiscal year 2024.

Table 4 continued

Prison	Unit	Custody level	Self-improvement			Education						Treatment							
			Changing Offender Behavior	Go Further	Impact on Crime Victims	Functional Literacy	GED	High School	Postsecondary degrees ²	Fire crew training	CTE ³	DUI	Outpatient	Intensive Outpatient	Moderate	Intensive	RSAT	Sex Offender—Year 1	Sex Offender—Year 2
	Morey	Cls	→			→	→	→					↑						
	Rast	Max	→			→	→	→					↑						
	Stiner	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑		↓				
	Sunrise	Cls				→	→	→											
Perryville	Lumley	Max	→			→	→	→			→		↑	↑					
	Piestewa	Min	→			↑	→	↑			↓								
	San Carlos	Min	→			→	↑	→			→	→	↑	↑	→				
	Santa Cruz	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑		→			→	
	Santa Rosa	Max	→			→	→	↑			→								
Phoenix	Alhambra	Max	→			↓	↓												
	Aspen	Med ⁵				→	→	→											
	Flamenco	All				→													
Safford	Fort Grant	Min	→			→	→	↓			→				→				
	Globe	Min	→			→	→	↓		↓	→			↑					
	Graham	Min	→			→	→				→		↑		↓				
	Tonto	Med	→			→	→				→		↑						
Tucson	Catalina	All	→			→	↓	↓											

No enrollments in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.



Enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but not fiscal year 2024.



Enrollments in both fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024.



No enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but enrollments in fiscal year 2024.

Table 4 continued

Prison	Unit	Custody level	Self-improvement			Education					Treatment							
			Changing Offender Behavior	Go Further	Impact on Crime Victims	Functional Literacy	GED	High School	Postsecondary degrees²	Fire crew training	CTE³	DUI	Outpatient	Intensive Outpatient	Moderate	Intensive	RSAT	Sex Offender—Year 1
	Cimarron	Cls	→			→	→	→					↑		→			
	Manzanita	Med				→	→	→			↓		↑				→	
	Rincon	Cls	→			→	→	→										
	Santa Rita	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑	↑	→			
	Whetstone	Min	→			→	→	→		↑	→	→	↑	↑	→			
	Winchester	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑	↑	→			
Winslow	Apache	Min	→			→	→	↑					↑		↓			
	Coronado	Min	→			→	→	↑		→	→		↑		→			
	Kaibab	Cls	→			→	→	→			↑		↑		→			
Yuma	Cheyenne	Med	→			→	→	→			→		↑					
	Cibola	Med	→			→	→	→			→	↑	↑		→			
	Cocopah	Min	↑					↑					↑					
	Dakota	Cls	→			→	→	→					↑		↑			
	LaPaz	Min	→			→	→	→			→	↑	↑		→			

No enrollments in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.



Enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but not fiscal year 2024.



Enrollments in both fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024.



No enrollments in fiscal year 2023, but enrollments in fiscal year 2024.

¹ Custody level is based on an inmate's risk to the public and staff, as well as the time remaining until the inmate is released. Additionally, because an inmate can be housed in any facility with an equal or higher custody level, we report the highest custody level reported for each unit rather than all custody levels within a unit.

² Our review of Department-provided data did not find any accurately entered enrollments in postsecondary education programs in fiscal year 2024 (see Chapter 5, pages 20 through 22).

Table 4 continued

- ³ Units are included if there was at least 1 enrollment in any CTE program (see page a-3, footnote 6, for a list of all CTE programs that reported an enrollment in fiscal year 2024).
- ⁴ The Department did not renew its contract with the vendor operating the private prison in Marana and transferred inmates housed there to other facilities in December 2023.
- ⁵ The Department reported it classifies the Phoenix Aspen Unit as a residential mental health medium-custody yard.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Department-provided data related to self-improvement, education, and treatment program fiscal year 2024 enrollments, and a Department-provided list of prison units and their custody levels.

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry





Review of Specific Self-Improvement or Treatment Programs

42-Month Followup of Report 21-118

The 2021 Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry performance audit found that the Department did not provide 3 of 4 programs we reviewed to most inmates who needed them, and many inmates who were enrolled in the programs did not complete them, impacting reduced recidivism and other rehabilitative benefits these programs provide to inmates.

We made 15 recommendations to the Department. As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department had implemented 5 recommendations and was in the process of implementing 6 recommendations, and 4 recommendations were no longer applicable. Since our 2024 annual compliance review, the Department has made further progress in implementing the outstanding recommendations, including contracting for additional substance abuse treatment services, finalizing and implementing the standard work that details how COIVs oversee the provision of major programs, and implementing its plan to provide DUI treatment to male inmates housed at State prisons (see details below).

Department’s status in implementing 15 recommendations

Implementation status		Number of recommendations
 Implemented		7 recommendations
 In process		3 recommendations
 No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s)		4 recommendations
 Not implemented		1 recommendation

As discussed in the Introduction (see page 4), effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, established an Independent Correctional Oversight Office (Oversight Office) with key responsibilities, including monitoring confinement conditions established by the Department, providing information about inmates' rights, and investigating and resolving public, inmate, and staff complaints made against Department. This law also repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which required our Office to complete the Department's annual compliance review and now requires the Oversight Office to complete an annual report on or before December 31 of each year that includes an assessment of the Department's compliance with the areas we annually assessed in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Because of this transfer in responsibility, we will collaborate with the Oversight Office regarding future follow-up work to assess the Department's efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. This may include deferring to the Oversight Office to follow up on some recommendations, while we continue to independently follow up on the remaining recommendations. For the recommendations we will continue to follow up on, including new recommendations we made in this year's annual review, we will assess the Department's efforts to implement those recommendations in summer 2026.

Recommendations to the Department

Finding 1: Department did not provide cognitive restructuring and Substance Abuse (SA) treatment programs to most inmates who needed them; therefore, these inmates could not achieve these programs' rehabilitative benefits

1. The Department should take steps to expand its capacity to provide its cognitive restructuring, SA treatment, and DUI treatment programs, and thereby increase inmate enrollments in these programs, by:
 - a. Continuing to certify applicable Correctional Officers (CO) IIIs and private prison staff to teach Changing Offender Behavior (COB).

▶ Status: **Implemented at 30 months.**

The Department established a multiphase process to help it continue to certify COIIIs and private prison staff to teach COB. For example, the Department implemented COB training/certification as part of its COIII training. Our analysis of Department-provided documentation found that, as of March 2024, the Department had certified 430 COB instructors, which is approximately 91 percent of its COIII staff. This is a substantial increase from the 124 certified COB instructors reported during our initial followup in October 2022.

- b. Continuing to monitor COB enrollments and completions to help ensure that program staff who are certified to teach COB are indeed teaching it.

► Status: **Not implemented.**

Although the Department established a Department Order in March 2022 that requires designated staff to monitor COB enrollments, completions, and noncompletions, it has not taken additional steps to ensure staff certified to teach COB are indeed teaching it. Additionally, the number of COB enrollments decreased in fiscal year 2024 from fiscal year 2023. For example, our review of a random sample of 26 of 425 program staff certified to teach COB at various prisons/units as of December 2024 found that 9 program staff taught COB classes between January 2024 and May 2025.¹ The Department reported that the remaining 17 staff did not teach COB classes because 11 were assigned to a unit or task that did not offer and/or was not responsible for teaching COB, and 6 were no longer employed or no longer in the COIII position at some point between January 2024 and May 2025. This potentially represents a decrease from the number of certified staff that taught COB in fiscal year 2023. Specifically, as reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, our review found that 16 of 22 randomly sampled certified staff taught COB during fiscal year 2023. By not ensuring that all certified staff teach COB, the Department's ability to enroll more inmates in this program may be negatively affected.

Further, our review of fiscal year 2024 inmate COB enrollment data found that the number of enrollments decreased in COB by approximately 900 as compared to fiscal year 2023. The decrease in the number of certified staff who taught COB between January 2024 and May 2025 may have contributed to the decrease in COB enrollments. The Department further reported that staff turnover, budgetary constraints, and security concerns at some prison units that led to inmates not attending classes may have also contributed to the decrease in COB enrollments. Finally, this decrease in COB enrollments contrasts with the increase of approximately 3,000 COB enrollments from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023.

- c. Finalizing and implementing the program-related standard work for COIVs.

► Status: **Implemented at 42 months.**

The Department developed and began implementing Department Order 925 and associated Technical Manual in March 2022 that includes specific program-related standard work and requires COIVs to regularly review program enrollments and provide oversight to COIIIs who facilitate programs for inmates such as cognitive restructuring. Specifically, COIVs are required to review the program rosters for any classes led by a COIII on the previous day, perform weekly reviews to ensure major programs are timely filled and determine whether additional COB classes should be offered, and perform monthly reviews of unit enrollments to identify any inmates who are past due for completing current enrollments. Our review of June and July 2025 daily/monthly/quarterly reports and discussion with a COIV on the use of

¹ Although the Department reported an additional 95 COIVs are certified to teach COB, our review focused only on the COIIIs who are certified to teach COB because the Department reported COIVs do not teach COB classes.

these reports found that COIVs use these reports to oversee the provision of major programs, including COB, and supervise COIIs who facilitate the COB program.

d. Continuing its efforts to fill its vacant licensed counselor positions.

▶ Status: **Implemented at 30 months.**

The Department reported as of March 2024 that 20 of its 23 counselor positions were filled within its prison facilities, which is a significant improvement from the 12 vacancies the Department reported in May 2021. The Department continues to make efforts to hire and retain substance abuse counselors to facilitate its addiction treatment programs through strategies such as hiring incentives, attending job fairs, and as noted in recommendation 1e, using additional appropriations to contract for SA treatment.

e. Using its increased appropriation to contract for additional SA treatment services as planned.

▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**

According to the Department's 2024 Drug and Alcohol Treatment report published in February 2025, it continues to contract with 11 counselors from 2 counseling organizations to offer SA treatment services to inmates. As explained in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department reported that 8 contracted counselors provided SA treatment services to inmates between March 2023 and February 2024, and an additional 3 counselors began providing services in March 2024. So, the Department has not further increased the number of contracted counselors.

However, the Department has expanded the types of SA treatment programs it offers. In addition to its moderate and intensive SA treatment programs and its DUI treatment programs, the Department added outpatient and intensive outpatient treatment programs in October 2023.² Additionally, the Department reported enrolling a total of 288 inmates in contracted SA treatment programs between August 2024 and January 2025, including 36 in a moderate treatment program, 80 in an outpatient program, and 172 in an intensive outpatient program.

Finally, as reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department previously requested and received \$5 million in appropriations to continue to contract for additional counselors. However, Laws 2024, Ch. 209, removed this \$5 million appropriation and instead, appropriated \$75 million and \$40 million to the Department for fiscal years 2024 and 2025, respectively, from the Consumer Restitution and Remediation Revolving Fund.³ According to Laws 2024, Ch. 209, the Department is required to use these appropriated monies for past and current Department costs for the care, treatment, programs and other expenditures for individuals with opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorder or

² Although the Department began offering outpatient and intensive outpatient programs in October 2023, these programs were not considered major programs until February 2024.

³ The Consumer Restitution and Remediation Revolving Fund is administered by the Arizona Office of the Attorney General. The Department's appropriations are exempt from lapsing.

mental health conditions or for any other approved purposes. Further, according to the Arizona Attorney General's website, as of June 30, 2024, the Department spent nearly \$52 million, including more than \$3 million on SA treatment counselors, nearly \$9 million on SA treatment, and nearly \$40 million on hepatitis C treatment, but had yet to spend more than \$23 million of the fiscal year 2024 \$75 million appropriation.⁴

The Department reported it has a goal of contracting with counselors and providing SA treatment services to 1,500 inmates annually and will use monies from this appropriation to contract for additional counselors.

- f.** Based on the number of inmates with assessed SA treatment needs, continuing to assess the level of counseling staff resources needed to meet inmates' SA treatment needs and requesting additional resources as appropriate, including monies to contract for SA treatment services.

▶ Status: **Implemented at 30 months.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department completed an assessment and concluded that an additional 60 counselors are necessary to meet the SA treatment needs of inmates. Additionally, the Department requested and received \$5 million in appropriations to continue to contract for additional counselors. However, as explained in recommendation 1e, Laws 2024, Ch. 209, removed the \$5 million appropriation and instead appropriated \$75 million and \$40 million to the Department for fiscal years 2024 and 2025, respectively, from the Consumer Restitution and Remediation Revolving Fund. The Department reported it has a goal of contracting with counselors and will use monies from this appropriation to do so.

- g.** Continuing to expand the use of technology as staff resources permit to provide SA treatment programs at State prisons where treatment has not been provided.

▶ Status: **Implemented at 30 months.**

As of March 2023, the Department offers virtual SA treatment programs at the Safford, Winslow, and Yuma State prisons, which previously offered limited opportunities for moderate SA treatment in calendar years 2017-2020. Our review of Department enrollment data for fiscal year 2023 found that the Department enrolled nearly 250 inmates in virtual SA treatment programs at the Safford, Winslow, and Yuma State prisons, of which nearly 200 inmates completed the program. In addition, according to Department records, the Department enrolled approximately 500 inmates in virtual SA treatment from March 2023 to February 2024, and as of April 2024, 274 inmates have completed the program.⁵

⁴ As of July 30, 2025, the Arizona Attorney General's website does not provide information on fiscal year 2025 expenditures.

⁵ Some of these 500 inmates were still participating in their program enrollment as of April 2024.

- h.** Completing the process to obtain licensure of its DUI treatment program and implementing its plan to provide DUI treatment to male inmates housed at State prisons.

► Status: **Implemented at 42 months.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department completed the process for and obtained licensure of its DUI education, screening, and treatment program at Tucson State prison and also provides this DUI treatment programming remotely to male inmates housed at its Yuma State prison.⁶ Our review of Department programming data for fiscal year 2024 found it had 217 total DUI treatment enrollments resulting in 190 completions for male inmates between 3 prison units at the Tucson and Yuma State prisons. These enrollment and completion totals represent an improvement from fiscal year 2023, when the Department had 32 DUI treatment program enrollments and 28 completions for male inmates at 1 unit at Tucson State prison.⁷ Finally, according to the Department, it intends to expand DUI treatment services to additional State prisons, but as of May 2025, reported it does not have a time frame for doing so.

Finding 2: Although program completion can decrease inmate recidivism, many enrolled inmates did not complete programs mostly due to transfers to different units and administrative discharges from programs

- 2.** The Department should continue to assess whether condensing SA treatment program time frames has helped reduce program noncompletions and assess its impact on inmate recidivism. Based on its assessments, the Department should continue to use the condensed time frames or make adjustments, as appropriate.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

Since our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department has further analyzed the impact of SA treatment program time frames on recidivism. Specifically, the Department provided us with the results of its analysis of 3-year recidivism rates for inmates who completed a non-condensed 6-month moderate treatment program between December 2019 and November 2024 and inmates who completed a condensed 3-month moderate treatment program between June 2021 and November 2024. Based on the results of its analysis, the Department determined that the 895 inmates that completed the condensed 3-month program and were subsequently released from prison had a recidivism rate of more than 20%, while the 3,141 inmates that completed the non-condensed program and were subsequently released had a recidivism rate of nearly 23%.

The Department reported it is conducting an analysis of whether condensed SA treatment programs helped reduce program noncompletions, but has yet to finalize this analysis. The Department reported it expects to complete this analysis in August 2026. Finally, despite our requests, the Department did not provide its recidivism analysis

⁶ The Department is also certified to provide DUI education, screening, and treatment at Perryville State prison that houses female inmates.

⁷ See Arizona Auditor General report 24-105 *Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, & Reentry—Annual compliance review of specific statutory and policy requirements*, Table 15, Appendix A, pages a-31 through a-32, for more information on the fiscal year 2023 numbers.

for our review and did not provide any information or analysis regarding reasons for the difference in the recidivism rate. According to the Department, it will continue to offer both the 6- and 3-month SA treatment programs and analyze the impact of each program on a participant's recidivism rate.

3. The Department should continue its project to research and track specific reasons inmates do not complete SA treatment programs at State prisons and use this information to address problems that contribute to program noncompletions.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

The Department has continued to monitor the reasons inmates have not completed SA treatment programs and has applied solutions described in other recommendations to reduce noncompletions. These solutions include condensing SA treatment program time frames to 3 months to help inmates complete these programs (see recommendation 2) and denying transfers of inmates enrolled in major programs to enable them to complete programs (see recommendation 4). However, during our work on the 2024 annual compliance review, we identified the same primary reasons for noncompletions as reported in our 2021 performance audit (Report 21-118), including transfers and administrative discharges. As a result, we made a new recommendation that encompasses and expands on this recommendation (see Appendix E, pages e-6 through e-9, recommendation 6). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

4. The Department should continue to implement its new process for approving transfers of inmates enrolled in major programs and codify this new process in its Department Orders. The Department should assess whether this new process helps to reduce program noncompletions due to inmate transfers and determine whether additional actions are needed.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

The Department has developed and implemented a process for approving transfers of inmates enrolled in major programs since July 2021 and codified this process in its Department Orders in September 2022. Although the Department reported that, for fiscal year 2023, this process has enabled over 50 inmates to complete their programs who otherwise would have been transferred and not finished their program, the Department has not yet assessed this process' impact on program noncompletions. We made a new recommendation that encompasses and expands on this recommendation (see Appendix E, pages e-5 through e-6, recommendation 5). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

5. The Department should update its program-enrollment guidance to provide standard and consistent direction on specific factors that all program staff should consider when identifying potential inmates to enroll in programs, including inmates' discipline histories, potential language barriers, assigned living spaces, racial balance, and other factors it deems appropriate, and train program staff on this updated guidance.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department revised its enrollment guidance for staff who use its priority-ranking report to identify and prioritize inmates for enrollment by narrowing the factors program staff should consider to the following 2 factors:⁸

- Inmates who will become eligible for an early prison release upon completion of a major program, prioritized by earliest release date.
- Inmates based on their individual risk and needs scores and remaining time in prison.

The Department reported providing training to its staff on the revised guidance in April 2023 and June 2023.

Additionally, as of June 2025, the Department procured and is in the process of implementing new assessment software, the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS), to work in conjunction with the priority-ranking report when enrolling inmates into various programs. According to Department documentation, ORAS allows staff to assess inmates and consider major factors such as the inmate's education, financial situation, family, and social support, along with their priority-ranking, when determining program enrollments. The Department reported it implemented ORAS in spring 2024 to Community Reentry Officers, who are responsible for supervising inmates when they are released from prison to community supervision. According to the Department, it began providing training on ORAS to program staff beginning in March 2025 and plans to have all necessary staff trained by the end of fiscal year 2026. The Department reported it is awaiting full implementation of ORAS before it revises its program-enrollment guidance to reflect how ORAS will be used to identify potential inmates to enroll in programs.

6. The Department should place its enrollment guidance materials in a single shared location to help ensure that they are readily accessible to program staff.

► Status: **Implemented at 6 months.**

7. The Department should, for the 4 programs we reviewed and other programs it deems appropriate, develop and implement documented processes to use enrollment data to monitor program noncompletions by prison/prison unit, both overall and by reason for noncompletion (e.g., inmate transfers, administrative discharges, etc.); research the causes for variation in program noncompletions across prisons/prison units; and use this

⁸ The Department's priority ranking report lists inmates in priority order for program enrollment to help State and private prison program staff responsible for program enrollment decide which inmates to enroll in available programs.

information to make changes, as needed, to its enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

The Department developed Department Orders and technical manuals effective March 2023 that require quality assurance coordinators to review monthly noncompletion information for the 4 programs we reviewed—the COB program, the Moderate SA Treatment program, the Intensive SA Treatment program, and the DUI Treatment program. This required review includes documenting reasons for noncompletions across prisons/units, and the Department reported that it discusses the information to determine if changes are needed. However, as discussed in recommendation 3, during our work for the 2024 annual compliance review, we identified the same primary reasons for noncompletions as reported in our 2021 performance audit (Report 21-118), including transfers and administrative discharges. As a result, we made a new recommendation that encompasses and expands on this recommendation (see Appendix E, pages e-6 through e-9, recommendation 6). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

Finding 3: Department does not monitor program-completion time frames, which would help it evaluate and potentially improve enrollment practices

8. For the 4 programs we reviewed and other programs it deems appropriate, the Department should develop and implement documented processes to use enrollment data to monitor program-completion time frames for unexpected values; research the causes for unexpected values in program-completion time frames; and use this information to make changes, as needed, to its enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

The Department developed and implemented Department Orders and technical manuals effective March 2023 that require quality assurance coordinators to review monthly enrollment information for the 4 programs we reviewed—the COB program, the Moderate SA Treatment program, the Intensive SA Treatment program, and the DUI Treatment program. This review requires monitoring enrollments to identify those that extend for unexpectedly long time frames, as well as completion/end dates to identify enrollments with unexpected short time frames. However, as discussed in Chapter 4 of our 2024 annual compliance review (see page 24 of our 2024 annual compliance review), our work for the 2024 annual compliance review identified additional unexpected values in the Department's enrollment data, such as inmates who completed a program and were subsequently re-enrolled in the same program. As a result, we made a new recommendation that encompasses and expands on this recommendation (see Appendix E, pages e-9 through e-10, recommendation 7). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry





Sunset Review

42-Month Followup of Report 21-119

The 2021 Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry performance audit and sunset review found that the Department met some statutory objectives and purposes in the areas we reviewed but did not release all inmates approved for the transition program 3 months early in 2020 and lacked a reliable process to ensure inmate grievances were processed according to its time frames.

We made 9 recommendations to the Department. As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department had implemented 1 recommendation and was in the process of implementing 7 recommendations, and 1 recommendation was no longer applicable. Since our 2024 annual compliance review, the Department has made further progress in implementing the recommendations, including incorporating automated eligibility determination processes for earned release credits and the transition program in ACIS, developing written information technology (IT) security procedures, and improving its formal inmate grievance process (see details below).

Department’s status in implementing 9 recommendations

Implementation status		Number of recommendations
 Implemented		4 recommendations
 Partially implemented		1 recommendation
 In process		3 recommendations
 No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s)		1 recommendation

As discussed in the Introduction (see page 4), effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, established an Independent Correctional Oversight Office (Oversight Office) with key responsibilities, including monitoring confinement conditions established by the Department, providing information about inmates' rights, and investigating and resolving public, inmate, and staff complaints made against Department. This law also repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which required our Office to complete the Department's annual compliance review and now requires the Oversight Office to complete an annual report on or before December 31 of each year that includes an assessment of the Department's compliance with the areas we annually assessed in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Because of this transfer in responsibility, we will collaborate with the Oversight Office regarding future follow-up work to assess the Department's efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. This may include deferring to the Oversight Office to follow up on some recommendations, while we continue to independently follow up on the remaining recommendations. For the recommendations we will continue to follow up on, including new recommendations we made in this year's annual review, we will assess the Department's efforts to implement those recommendations in summer 2026.

Recommendations to the Department

Finding 1: In 2020, Department did not release a quarter of inmates approved for transition program the full 3 months early as statutorily required, which may lengthen their prison stays, thereby increasing Department costs

- 1.** To help ensure inmates are timely released 3 months early to the transition program, as statutorily required, the Department should:
 - a.** Establish time frames in its staff procedures for how quickly the eligibility reviews for the transition program and drug possession release should be initiated and completed and prioritize for review those inmates who are closest to release.

► **Status: Implemented at 30 months.**

The Department has established time frames for staff to initiate and complete various steps for conducting transition program and drug possession release eligibility reviews, including steps to prioritize for review those inmates who are closest to release. For example, according to Department Order 1001, correctional officers are required to meet with an inmate within 3 workdays after the inmate meets the transition program eligibility requirements to complete release planning documents.¹ Additionally, the Transition Coordinator is required to determine an

¹ As reported in footnote 3 of our initial followup to the 2024 annual compliance review (see Appendix E, page e-3), in June 2025, the Department revised Department Order 1001 to require Department staff to meet with the inmate during their intake process or upon arrival at a new prison to discuss the transition program. Following this discussion, Department staff will document the inmate's decision on transition program participation.

inmate's eligibility for the transition program within 2 workdays if an inmate has less than 90 calendar days to serve prior to their projected release date.² The Department also reported that as of January 2024, it has automated eligibility reviews and sentence calculations for drug possession release in its inmate management system. As explained in recommendation 1c, we reviewed the Department's implementation of the automated eligibility reviews and sentence calculations for drug possession release during our 2025 annual compliance review.

- b.** Develop and implement a written procedure for monitoring, identifying, and addressing delays in transition program processes that are within the Department's control.

- ▶ Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

As of January 2023, the Department updated its transition program release criteria in Department policy and anticipates that these changes will address some delays in transition program processes that are within the Department's control. However, during our work on the 2024 annual compliance review, we identified 9 inmates who were untimely released to the transition program in fiscal year 2023 due to factors within the Department's control such as untimely inmate classifications and delays in obtaining an inmate-signed transition program agreement. As a result, we made a new recommendation related to the transition program that encompasses and expands on this recommendation (see 2024 annual compliance review, recommendation 1). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

- c.** Continue to work on automating the process for identifying inmates who may qualify for drug possession release and calculating their potential drug possession release dates.

- ▶ Status: **Implemented at 42 months.**

As of January 2024, the Department automated the process in ACIS for identifying inmates who may qualify for drug possession release and calculating their potential drug possession release dates. Further, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see pages 5 through 8), our review of 31 inmate releases between August 1, 2024, and November 30, 2024, found that the automated process accurately identified all 9 inmates who qualified for drug possession release and correctly calculated their potential drug possession release dates.

² As reported in recommendation 1c of our initial followup to the 2024 annual compliance review (see Appendix E, pages e-2 through e-4), in June 2025, the Department revised Department Order 1001 to require Department staff to review and approve an inmate's eligibility for the transition program within 1 business day of ACIS preliminarily determining that the inmate is eligible for the transition program based on information entered into ACIS.

Sunset Factor 2: The extent to which the Department has met its statutory objective and purpose and the efficiency with which it has operated.

The Department should:

2. Continue to work on automating the processes for identifying inmates who may qualify for or meet the drug transition and September 2021 standard transition program eligibility requirements.

▶ Status: **Implemented at 42 months.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department finalized its automated process for identifying inmates who may qualify for or meet the September 2021 standard transition program eligibility requirements in September 2022. Further, as of January 2024 and explained in recommendation 1c, the Department has automated the process for identifying inmates who may qualify for the drug transition program and calculating their potential drug transition program release dates. Our review of 31 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found that the automated process in ACIS accurately identified 20 inmates who qualified for the transition program—2 inmates who qualified for the drug transition program and 18 inmates who qualified for the standard transition programs—and correctly calculated their potential transition program release date.³

3. Evaluate and prioritize developing all Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology (ASET)-required IT security policies based on its IT environment and mission. The Department should then use this information to guide its efforts to develop and implement written IT security procedures in line with ASET requirements and credible industry standards, focusing on the IT security areas with the highest security risks first.

▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department has developed an internal IT technical manual that includes information on all State-required IT Security policy areas and requires the Department to annually review and update its information system security plan.⁴ Additionally, the Department developed a written action plan that lists the steps required to implement the IT technical manual and prioritizes higher risk areas for implementation. This action plan includes specific tasks, the status of those tasks, who they are assigned to, and expected milestone dates for all 17 State-required policy areas. As of July 2025, the Department's updated action plan indicates that it has completed the planning phase for 11 of 17 areas, which involves identifying the tasks needed to implement these areas. The Department has transitioned to developing, implementing, and monitoring the implementation of the tasks for the 11 areas, which includes developing policies and procedures and training staff on these policies and procedures. Finally, according to the Department's action plan, all phases for the 17 areas are scheduled to be completed between July 31, 2025 and December 31, 2026.

³ Inmates who qualify for the drug transition program may or may not be eligible for drug possession release. Only 2 of 9 inmates we reviewed who qualified for drug possession release, as explained in recommendation 1c, also qualified for the drug transition program.

⁴ Effective September 24, 2022, Laws 2022, Ch. 50, transferred the responsibility for State agency IT and data security oversight from the Arizona Department of Administration—Arizona Strategic Enterprise Technology Office to the Arizona Department of Homeland Security.

4. The Department should create a written action plan for implementing recommendation 3 that includes specific tasks, the status of those tasks, and their estimated completion dates, as well as a process for regularly reviewing and updating the plan based on its progress.
 - ▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**
See explanation for recommendation 3.

Sunset Factor 3: The extent to which the Department serves the entire State rather than specific interests.

5. The Department should develop and implement revisions to its conflict-of-interest policy and procedures to help ensure compliance with State conflict-of-interest requirements and better align its policy and procedures with recommended practices, including (1) reminding Department employees at least annually to complete a new conflict-of-interest disclosure form when their circumstances change; (2) maintaining a special disclosure file of all required documentation, such as disclosures of substantial interest; and (3) documenting its process for remediating any disclosed conflicts of interests.
 - ▶ Status: **Partially implemented at 42 months.**
As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department had taken some steps to implement this recommendation. This includes annually reminding all employees about its conflict-of-interest policy and procedures and to complete a new conflict-of-interest disclosure form when their circumstances change. Additionally, Department policy requires the Department's procurement division to maintain a special disclosure file to document disclosures of substantial interest and remediate any disclosed conflicts of interest related to its procurement activities. Although not required by policy, as of April 2025, the Department has established a special file for all potential staff conflict-of-interest disclosures and, as of July 2025, reported it was reviewing disclosure forms completed in calendar year 2025 for potential conflicts-of-interest. Finally, the Department has revised its policy and procedures to require its employees to disclose any secondary employment and an employee's supervisor to review and approve the disclosed secondary employment. However, the Department has not updated its policy and procedures to require the review and remediation of all disclosed conflicts.

Sunset Factor 6: The extent to which the Department has been able to investigate and resolve complaints that are within its jurisdiction and the ability of the Department to timely investigate and resolve complaints within its jurisdiction.

6. The Department should establish a process for ensuring that the Department, including prison units, have complete and accurate formal inmate grievance information.
 - ▶ Status: **Implemented at 42 months.**
The Department has taken various steps to establish a grievance process, including steps to ensure that it has complete and accurate formal inmate grievance information.

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department implemented new software to track and process inmate grievances, including monitoring compliance with time frames for the various steps in its inmate grievance-handling process. Additionally, we found that the Department had trained its staff responsible for handling inmate grievances on the new software and using the software to monitor compliance with the inmate grievance-handling process time frames.

Additionally, our March 2025 observation of the grievance process at the Perryville State prison found that if an inmate wishes to file a grievance, the Department provides them with a grievance form that requires the inmate to document key information such as the inmate's name, location where grievance occurred (e.g., prison/unit), description of grievance, and the inmate's proposed resolution. Following the submission of this form, the unit COIV/grievance coordinator will record the grievance in ACIS and the Department's grievance tracking software. Further, the grievance tracking software generates a daily open grievance monitoring report that is submitted to various Department staff for review, including unit COIVs and the Department's General Counsel, and contains information such as a description of the grievance, due date for resolving the grievance, how long the grievance has been open, the prison/unit where the grievance occurred, and the stage of review.

Finally, in May 2025, the Department revised Department Order 802 related to its inmate grievance process to include new oversight steps and the use of technology. Specifically, these revisions adjust the appeals process for grievance resolutions to be handled through a central office appeals coordinator instead of an assistant director. Additional changes require Department staff to send grievance resolutions directly to an inmate through both a physical form as well as electronically through the use of tablets and eliminating the 120-day overall time frame for resolving complaints and instead outlining specific time frames for the various steps in the grievance process.⁵ For example, Department staff must initially respond to and attempt to resolve a grievance within 15 calendar days of receipt. Because the Department made these changes to Department Order 802 in May 2025, we were unable to review its implementation of these revisions, including its adherence to the revised time frames.

7. The Department should establish a centralized process to monitor compliance with its time frames for the various steps in its inmate grievance handling process, including the overall 120-day time frame for resolving grievances, to help identify and address potential issues related to processing inmate grievances within required time frames.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

See explanation for recommendation 6.

⁵ The Department's formal process for medical grievances is similar to the process for nonmedical grievances. However, medical grievances are investigated and addressed by the Department's healthcare contractor as opposed to Department staff.

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry

Annual Compliance Review of Specific Statutory and Policy Requirements

24-Month Followup of Report 23-103





A.R.S. §41-1610.02 requires our Office to annually review the Department’s compliance with various programs, reporting requirements, policies, and other provisions related to the Department’s rehabilitation of inmates and issue a report by September 1. Our 2023 Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry Annual Compliance Review found that the Department released 122 of 123 inmates we reviewed within earned release time frames but did not release some inmates 3 months early and did not comply with some reporting requirements, and between 31 and 51 percent of inmate enrollments in its self-improvement, education, and treatment programs ended in noncompletions, potentially impacting inmates’ receipt of intended benefits.

We made 1 recommendation to the Legislature and 10 recommendations to the Department. As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, the Department had implemented 1 recommendation and was in the process of implementing 6 recommendations, and 3 recommendations were no longer applicable. Since our 2024 annual compliance review, the Department has made further progress in implementing the recommendations, including fully implementing 1 additional recommendation related to statutorily required earned release credit program reports (see details below).

Legislature’s status in implementing 1 recommendation

Implementation status		Number of recommendations
	Implemented	1 recommendation

Department’s status in implementing 10 recommendations

Implementation status		Number of recommendations
	Implemented	2 recommendations
	In process	5 recommendations
	No longer applicable	1 recommendation
	No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s)	2 recommendations

As discussed in the Introduction (see page 4), effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, established an Independent Correctional Oversight Office (Oversight Office) with key responsibilities, including monitoring confinement conditions established by the Department, providing information about inmates’ rights, and investigating and resolving public, inmate, and staff complaints made against Department. This law also repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which required our Office to complete the Department’s annual compliance review and now requires the Oversight Office to complete an annual report on or before December 31 of each year that includes an assessment of the Department’s compliance with the areas we annually assessed in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Because of this transfer in responsibility, we will collaborate with the Oversight Office regarding future follow-up work to assess the Department’s efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. This may include deferring to the Oversight Office to follow up on some recommendations, while we continue to independently follow up on the remaining recommendations. For the recommendations we will continue to follow up on, including new recommendations we made in this year’s annual review, we will assess the Department’s efforts to implement those recommendations in summer 2026.

Recommendations to the Legislature

Chapter 1: Department released eligible inmates we reviewed consistent with statute with one exception, and has not complied with statutory reporting requirements

1. The Legislature should consider revising statute to specify how and/or to whom the Department should report or otherwise post or publish information to comply with the reporting requirements in A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P).

▶ Status: **Implemented at 24 months.**

Effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 10, revised A.R.S. §41-1603.01 to authorize the Department to post on the Department's website the information from all statutorily required reports, forms, plans, and summaries, and to state that posting this information shall be treated as if the Department submitted the report, form, plan, or summary to the relevant entity. The legislation also revised A.R.S. §41-1603.01 to require the Department Director to notify the relevant entities that the information has been posted on the Department's website.

Recommendations to the Department

Chapter 1: Department released eligible inmates we reviewed consistent with statute with one exception, and has not complied with statutory reporting requirements

1. The Department should develop and implement periodic training for Department staff related to earned release credit program provisions and requirements to help ensure eligible inmates are released according to earned release credit requirements and time frames.
 - ▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**

As discussed in Chapter 1, pages 7 through 8, as of March 2025, the Department has developed training video tutorials for its staff on various time-computation topics, including calculating earned release credits, the transition program, and calculating release credits earned when an inmate was serving time in a local or county jail. These tutorials provide training on the types of offenses that make an inmate eligible for each earned release credit program, requirements for each program, and frequently asked questions. However, although Department staff can directly view the completed tutorials through specific website links, the Department reported that it has not yet created a central repository with all completed tutorials on its intranet site or determined a schedule for when it will conduct a large-scale training for its staff to view and/or complete the tutorials. The Department is also in the process of placing some of the tutorials on its intranet for inmate accessibility.
2. The Department should review the reporting requirements outlined in A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P), determine the feasibility of the reporting requirements, and develop a process to compile and report the required information.
 - ▶ Status: **Implemented at 24 months.**

A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P) requires the Department to report quarterly and annually on the earned release credit program and other related information, including data related to drug possession earned release credits and the transition program. As of March 2025, the Department has posted these statutorily required reports on its website a total of 7 times between fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2025. Our review of the Department's quarterly earned release credit reports for the third and fourth quarters of fiscal year 2024 found that these reports included all statutorily required information. Additionally, our review of the Department's fiscal year 2024 annual report found that this report included all statutorily required information.

3. If the Department deems some requirements are not feasible, work with the Legislature to develop reporting requirements that are feasible and determine to whom the information should be reported.

► Status: **No longer applicable at 12 months.**

The Department determined it will develop and produce reports that provide information related to all requirements outlined in A.R.S. §41-1604.07(P), and in fiscal year 2023 began publishing these reports on its website, which is accessible to the public. Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

Chapter 2: Department did not release to transition program one of 41 inmates we reviewed and did not release 8 of 41 inmates as required three months early due to factors in and out of its control, and did not comply with some reporting recommendations

4. The Department should continue its efforts to implement recommendation 1b from our Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry—Sunset Review (Report 21-119), to help ensure eligible inmates are timely released 3 months early to the transition program, as statutorily required.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

As discussed in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, as of January 2023, the Department updated its transition program release criteria in its Department Orders and anticipated that these changes would address some delays in transition program processes that are within the Department's control that led to the untimely release of some inmates. During our 2025 annual compliance review, our review of the Department's determination of transition program eligibility for a stratified random sample of 31 of 5,066 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found that the Department correctly determined that 20 of 31 inmates were eligible for the transition program and that the remaining 11 inmates were not eligible for the transition program. However, the Department did not timely release 2 of 20 eligible inmates to the transition program, in accordance with program requirements.¹ As discussed in Chapter 2, pages 9 through 11, and Appendix E, pages e-2 through e-4, these 2 inmates entered the Department's custody with 3 months or less remaining to serve on their sentence, but a delay in Department staff's review of these 2 inmates' eligibility for the transition program impacted their timely release.

5. The Department should comply with all reporting requirements for the transition program including timely distribution to required parties, annually reporting on the number of inmates who were on a waiting list to receive transition program services, and the number of participants who did not receive an early release under the transition program.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

¹ A third inmate was not timely released to the transition program. Although provided the opportunity to sign the required transition program agreement prior to their potential release date, this inmate refused to sign the agreement until after their potential release date had passed. Once the inmate signed the required documentation, the Department reviewed and approved the inmate within 1 business day and released the inmate within 2 business days of approval.

The Department developed and submitted 2 statutorily required transition program reports in July 2024 and September 2024, prior to their respective statutory deadlines, that included all statutorily required transition program information (see Chapter 6, page 62, for more information on these reports). However, although the Department sent both reports to the Governor, President of the Arizona Senate, and Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, contrary to statute, the Department did not distribute both reports to the Arizona Secretary of State.² Additionally, the Department submitted the second report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee Director in October 2024, 28 days after the statutory deadline. According to the Department, it did not timely provide this report to the Secretary of State or Joint Legislative Budget Committee director due to the vacancy of the position responsible for report distribution.

6. The Department should continue its efforts to update the transition program pamphlet and distribute the updated pamphlet with all transition program eligibility requirements and eliminate requirements that no longer apply.

► Status: **Implemented at 12 months.**

In February 2024, the Department revised and began distributing an updated pamphlet that contained information that complied with statute. In March 2024, we observed the updated pamphlet being distributed to inmates.

Chapter 3: Between 31 and 51 percent of inmate enrollments in Department-offered programs ended in non-completion in fiscal year 2022, potentially resulting in inmates not receiving intended benefits

7. The Department should develop and implement a process to review enrollment, participation, and completion data for all self-improvement, education, and treatment programs for unexpected values in time frames and dates, and identify duplications, and then make corrections accordingly.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

In response to recommendation 8 from our 2021 performance audit report (Report 21-118), the Department developed and implemented Department Orders and technical manuals that require quality assurance coordinators to review monthly enrollment information for the COB program, Moderate SA Treatment program, Intensive SA Treatment program, and DUI Treatment program. This review requires monitoring of enrollments to identify those that extend for unexpectedly long time frames, as well as completion/end dates to identify enrollments with unexpectedly short time frames. However, this process does not incorporate other types of unexpected values we identified, such as duplicate enrollments. In addition, this process does not review enrollment data for other self-improvement, education, and treatment programs for which we also identified unexpected values. For example, we found additional unexpected values during our 2024 annual compliance review, such as inmates who were enrolled in and completed a program but then were re-enrolled in

² After we brought these issues to the Department's attention, the Department reported that it provided the transition program reports to the Secretary of State in April 2025.

the same program and did not complete the program. As a result, we made a new recommendation related to the unexpected values we found that encompasses this recommendation as well as the recommendation we made in our 2021 performance audit report (see Appendix E, pages e-9 through e-10, recommendation 7). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

8. The Department should, in conjunction with its efforts to implement recommendation 8 from our September 2021 performance audit (Report 21-118), research the causes for unexpected values and use this information to make changes, as needed, to its enrollment, participation, and completion policies, guidance, and/or trainings or identify and implement system updates that are needed to prevent errors.

► Status: **No longer applicable—superseded by new recommendation(s).**

As explained in recommendation 7, the Department has developed and implemented a process to review monthly enrollment information for the COB program, the Moderate SA Treatment program, the Intensive SA Treatment program, and the DUI Treatment program. Although this process requires quality assurance coordinators to research the reasons behind individual unexpected time frames and completion/end dates, more time is needed for the Department to identify potential patterns in data errors and implement appropriate solutions that would result in less data errors. Further, we found additional unexpected values during our 2024 annual compliance review, such as inmates who were enrolled in and completed a program but then were re-enrolled in the same program and did not complete the program. As a result, we made a new recommendation related to the unexpected values we found that encompasses this recommendation as well as the recommendation we made in our 2021 performance audit report (see Appendix E, pages e-9 through e-10, recommendation 7). Therefore, this recommendation is no longer applicable.

Chapter 4: Department has no Department Orders regarding industry-recommended reporting guidelines but said it sees potential value in developing them

9. The Department should continue its efforts to develop and then implement Department Orders related to reporting guidelines. The Department Orders should address the reporting issues we included in Report 23-103.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

The Department has developed draft language for Department Order 105 that establishes responsible parties and time frames for developing and reviewing reports related to external reporting guidelines, including steps for applicable Department representatives and subject matter experts to review reports for accuracy and distribute reports based on statutory requirements. According to the Department, as of April 2025, this draft language is under review; however, the Department did not provide an expected approval date for the Department Order. Additionally, the Department reported that in July 2024, after we published our prior 2024 annual compliance review, it developed and began using a new report-tracking program. Our review of this tracking

program found that it provides Department staff with information related to each report the Department is required to produce, including the applicable statutory requirements, required publication frequency, and number of days until the next publishing deadline. Further, in November 2024, the Department updated its tracking program to provide deadline notifications to staff responsible for key report processing steps. Finally, the draft language for Department Order 105 incorporates the new tracking-program process, including the automated deadline notifications for key report-processing steps to responsible parties.

Chapter 5: Department’s drug and alcohol treatment programs report did not comply with some statutory requirements and include it incorrect information, potentially impacting stakeholders’ ability to make informed decisions

- 10.** The Department should ensure that its annual drug and alcohol treatment program report complies with statutory requirements and includes correct information by developing a process to review the report for statutory compliance and that the correct information is included. This process could be developed in conjunction with the Department Orders related to reporting guidelines it develops and implements for recommendation 9.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

Our review of the Department’s 2024 annual drug and alcohol treatment program report found that the report complied with 8 of 10 statutory requirements (see Chapter 6, Table 3, pages 26 through 27). The 2024 annual report included information related to the total cost per offender for each program, which is information that the Department did not include in its 2023 annual report. However, the Department did not issue the 2024 annual report by December 1, 2024, as statutorily required and instead issued the report in February 2025, more than 2 months after the statutory deadline. Additionally, the Department did not distribute the report to the Arizona Secretary of State as statutorily required.³ The Department reported that the delay in issuing the report and not distributing the report to the Secretary of State resulted from a lack of staff available to review the report, including report revisions, prior to issuing it. Following this delay, the Department developed a new process to improve its compliance with the statutory deadline for the report by providing automated notifications to staff responsible for the review, completion, and distribution of the report (see recommendation 9 for more information on the new process).

Additionally, although the 2024 annual drug and alcohol treatment program report included data and information required by statute for the previous 12 months, the report lacks a publication date or effective date for the data cited and included in the report. Without this information, stakeholders may not be able to place the data and associated results in the appropriate perspective, including comparing the data and associated results to prior data and results.⁴

³ After we brought this to its attention, the Department reported it provided the drug and alcohol treatment program report to the Secretary of State in April 2025.

⁴ After we asked the Department about the reporting time frame, it indicated that the 2024 annual report included data from December 1, 2023 through November 30, 2024. The Department’s 2023 annual report included data from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.





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

Initial Followup of Report 24-105

A.R.S. §41-1610.02 requires our Office to annually review the Department's compliance with various programs, reporting requirements, policies, and other provisions related to the Department's rehabilitation of inmates and issue a report by September 1. Our 2024 Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry Annual Compliance Review found that the Department released 79 of 80 inmates we reviewed within earned release time frames but did not release 14 inmates to the transition program 3 months early and did not timely notify some victims of early inmate release, limiting their ability to object; and between 22 and 44 percent of inmate enrollments in self-improvement, education, and treatment programs ended in noncompletions, potentially impacting inmates' receipt of programs' intended benefits.

We made 14 recommendations to the Department as part of our 2024 annual compliance review, and we found the Department has made progress in implementing these recommendations. This includes addressing delays in obtaining signed transition program agreements, notifying victims of inmates who are scheduled to be released early to the transition program at least 20 days prior to the inmate's scheduled release, and monitoring all major programming data for unexpected values and noncompletions (see details below).

Department’s status in implementing 14 recommendations

Implementation status		Number of recommendations
	Implemented	4 recommendations
	In process	7 recommendations
	In process in a different manner	1 recommendation
	Not implemented	2 recommendations

As discussed in the Introduction (see page 4), effective September 26, 2025, Laws 2025, Ch. 258, established an Independent Correctional Oversight Office (Oversight Office) with key responsibilities, including monitoring confinement conditions established by the Department, providing information about inmates’ rights, and investigating and resolving public, inmate, and staff complaints made against Department. This law also repealed A.R.S. §41-1610.02, which required our Office to complete the Department’s annual compliance review and now requires the Oversight Office to complete an annual report on or before December 31 of each year that includes an assessment of the Department’s compliance with the areas we annually assessed in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Because of this transfer in responsibility, we will collaborate with the Oversight Office regarding future follow-up work to assess the Department’s efforts to implement the outstanding recommendations we made in our previous performance audit, sunset review, and annual compliance review reports. This may include deferring to the Oversight Office to follow up on some recommendations, while we continue to independently follow up on the remaining recommendations. For the recommendations we will continue to follow up on, including new recommendations we made in this year’s annual review, we will assess the Department’s efforts to implement those recommendations in summer 2026.

Recommendations to the Department

Chapter 2: Department complied with some transition program provisions but did not release or untimely released some inmates we reviewed

1. The Department should, in conjunction with recommendation 1b from our September 2021 performance audit and sunset review, continue to monitor, identify, and address delays in processes that are within the Department’s control that delay inmate transition program releases. These efforts should include addressing:

a. Untimely inmate classification.

► Status: **Implemented at 12 months.**

According to Department Order 801, inmates are ineligible for the transition program until the Department completes the inmate custody-level classification process.¹ Additionally, Department staff are required to complete the classification process within 9 working days of an inmate's admission to a Department facility, or within 3 working days if the inmate has 6 months or less remaining on their sentence. Our review of a stratified random sample of 20 inmates the Department determined were eligible for the transition program found that it adhered to its Department Order for classifying 19 of 20 inmates.² The Department classified 1 inmate in 10 working days after admission, 1 day more than the 9 working days required by its Department Order. The Department could not explain why the classification process was delayed for this inmate. However, the 1-day delay in classification did not impact the timely release of this inmate to the transition program, and therefore, we have determined this recommendation to be implemented.

b. Delays in obtaining signed transition program agreements.

► Status: **Implemented at 12 months.**

According to Department Order 1001, an inmate must sign a transition program agreement prior to their release to the transition program. Our review of a stratified random sample of 20 inmates released to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found that all 20 inmates had a signed transition program agreement prior to release and were released 3 months early to the transition program, as required by statute.³

c. Untimely transition program approval.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

According to Department Order 1001, if the inmate has less than 90 calendar days to their projected transition program release date, Department staff are required to review and approve an inmate's eligibility for the transition program within 1 business day of ACIS preliminarily determining that the inmate is eligible for the transition program based on information entered into ACIS. Our review of a stratified random sample of 20 inmates released to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found 10 inmates were determined preliminarily eligible for the transition program with less than 90 calendar days to their projected

¹ The classification process refers to the assessment Department staff conducts that determines the inmate's appropriate custody level and is based on the risk the inmate poses to other inmates and Department staff.

² We reviewed a stratified random sample of 31 of 5,066 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, for transition program eligibility and found that the Department correctly determined that 20 of 31 inmates were eligible for the transition program and 11 of 31 inmates were not eligible for the program.

³ Effective June 20, 2025, the Department revised Department Order 1001 to incorporate additional steps to help ensure inmates timely sign the transition program agreement. Specifically, if an inmate has less than 4 months until their release date, Department staff are required to meet with the inmate during their intake process or upon arrival at a new prison to discuss the transition program. Following this discussion, Department staff will document the inmate's decision on transition program participation.

transition program release date.⁴ Of these 10 inmates, 5 had their preliminary eligibility reviewed and approved by Department staff within 1 business day in accordance with the Department Order. Contrary to this Department Order, the other 5 inmates had their preliminary eligibility reviewed and approved between 4 and 12 business days after becoming preliminarily eligible.

According to the Department, an increase in the number of potentially eligible inmates for the transition program that require review to determine eligibility likely contributed to these delays. Finally, as explained in Chapter 2, pages 9 through 11, this delay in the review and approval impacted 2 of the 5 inmates' timely release to the transition program.

d. Delays in approving post-release placements.

► Status: **Implemented at 12 months.**

As reported in our prior 2024 annual compliance review, effective January 22, 2023, the Department revised Department Order 1002 to allow inmates to be released to the transition program either with a Department-approved home plan or as a homeless release.^{5,6} Our review of a stratified random sample of 20 inmates released to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found that post-release placement approval.

Chapter 3: Department did not timely notify a victim of an inmate's early release in accordance with statute or notify victims of 20-day time frame to object to a release, potentially impacting the victim's ability to object to an inmate's early release

- 2.** The Department should send victims of inmates who are scheduled to be released early to the transition program a notification of the planned early release at least 20 days prior to the inmate's scheduled release pursuant to A.R.S. §31-281(B)(4).

► Status: **Implemented at 12 months.**

Our review of a stratified random sample of 3 of 44 inmates who were released early to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, and had a victim who requested to be notified, found that the Department sent notification to all 3 victims at least 20 days prior to the inmate's release, in accordance with statute.

⁴ The other 10 inmates were reviewed and determined eligible prior to 90 days before their projected transition program release date.

⁵ See Arizona Auditor General report 24-105 *Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, & Reentry—Annual compliance review of specific statutory and policy requirements*, Chapter 2, page 12, for more information on the Department's changes to its post-release placement process.

⁶ Effective June 20, 2025, the Department revised Department Order 1001 to require Department staff to review and approve a home plan within 5 business days when an inmate's projected transition release is within 150 calendar days, which is an increase from the 110 calendar days. This revision did not adjust the requirement for Department staff to review and approve a home plan within 3 business days if the inmate's projected transition release date is within 90 calendar days.

3. The Department should revise Department Order 1002 to release inmates early to the transition program only after a victim that has requested notification is provided notice and a 20-day opportunity to be heard and potentially object to the release pursuant to A.R.S. §31-281(B)(4).

► Status: **Not implemented.**

Our 2025 review of Department Order 1002 found it does not include the statutory requirement that an inmate may only be released once a victim has the opportunity for their objection to be heard, similar to what we found in our prior 2024 annual compliance review. In January 2025, the Department drafted language for Department Order 1002 that includes the statutorily required victim notification and 20-day opportunity to be heard and potentially object to the release and, in June 2025, reported it is in the process of finalizing the revised Department Order but does not have an anticipated approval date. However, until it finalizes the revised Department Order, the Department is at risk for releasing inmates to the transition program before victims who have requested to be notified have the full statutorily mandated time period to object to the early release.

4. The Department should update its post-conviction notice letter to inform victims of the 20-day time frame to object to an inmate's early release to the transition program after receiving the Department's final release notification.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

Our review of victim notification letters for the stratified random sample of 3 of 44 inmates who were released early to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, found that 1 victim notification letter did not include any statutorily required information regarding a victim's ability and/or option to object to an inmate's early release. The Department reported that Department staff sent an incorrect letter instead of the form letter the Department updated to include the 20-day objection time frame language because the staff member was recently hired and still in training at the time the letter was sent.

Chapter 4: Approximately 60 percent of inmate enrollments in Department-offered major programs ended in a completion in fiscal year 2023, representing a slight improvement from fiscal year 2022, but many enrollments still resulted in a noncompletion

5. The Department should, in conjunction with recommendation 4 from our 2021 performance audit, continue to implement its process for approving transfers of inmates enrolled in major programs, assess whether this process helps to reduce program noncompletions due to inmate transfers, and make further changes to the process to reduce noncompletions as needed.

► Status: **Implementation in process in a different manner.**

The Department has developed and implemented a process for approving transfers of inmates enrolled in major programs since July 2021 and codified this process in its Department Orders in September 2022. The Department reported that this process

includes reviewing key factors including current program enrollment, expected time to program completion, and requirements from other operational concerns, such as staff and inmate safety and security, that take priority over inmate programming needs. Department staff further reported that when an inmate is transferred, Department staff track all transfers and aim to promptly reenroll the inmate in a comparable program at the receiving facility.

As shown in Table 5 on page e-7, our review of Department provided inmate major programming data for fiscal year 2024 found that 5,047 of 26,618, or approximately 19% of enrollments ended in a noncompletion due to inmate transfer. This represents an increase of more than 1,900 noncompletions because of inmate transfers as compared to fiscal year 2022.⁷ According to the Department, it will prioritize transfers for operational concerns, such as inmate and staff safety, regardless of whether the inmate is enrolled in a major program, and this may have contributed to the increase in the number of inmate transfers. Although noncompletions from inmate transfers increased in fiscal year 2024, we found that 1,660 of 5,047, or approximately 33% of these inmates, were later re-enrolled in the same program during fiscal year 2024, leading to an additional 594 completions.

6. The Department should, in conjunction with recommendations 3 and 7 from our September 2021 performance audit, continue to develop and implement documented processes for all major programs to use enrollment data to:
 - a. Monitor major program enrollments, completions, and noncompletions by prison/prison unit, both overall and by reason for noncompletion.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

The Department has revised its policies to include a process to conduct a monthly review of Changing Offender Behavior and substance abuse major program enrollments to evaluate completions and noncompletions, but its policy does not include this process for other major programs. Although not included in its policy, the Department reviews monthly reports of enrollments, completions, and noncompletions for a total of 12 of 17 major programs.⁸ Our review of the monthly enrollment reports for August through December 2024, found these reports include the number of inmates currently enrolled in each of these programs and the number of monthly completions for each program. However, these reports did not include major program information by prison/unit; provide information on any program noncompletions, including the reasons for noncompletions for any major programs; or the enrollments, completions, and noncompletions for the Department's 5 remaining major programs. As a result, the Department may not have complete

⁷ The increase in inmate transfers may be partially attributed to the Department's efforts to better track and document the reasons for program noncompletions. For example, according to the Department, it notified staff about correctly using canceled program group, as a reason for noncompletion, such as when a program group is created in error or the loss of an instructor combined with an inability to find a replacement instructor. As a result, as noted in Table 5, noncompletions because of a canceled program group went from 2,761 in fiscal year 2023 to 0 in fiscal year 2024. This change may have contributed to the increase in identifying inmate transfers as a reason for program noncompletions.

⁸ The 12 programs reviewed are functional literacy, high school diploma, GED, career and technical education, outpatient treatment for substance use disorder, intensive outpatient treatment for substance use disorder, moderate treatment for substance use disorder, intensive treatment for substance use disorder, residential substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment years 1 and 2, and Changing Offender Behavior.

information to assess if changes to its enrollment policies, guidance, and practices would help improve its rate of program completions. According to the Department, it plans to revise its monthly reports to include enrollments, completions, and noncompletions for all major programs and provide major program noncompletion reasons by prison/unit but did not indicate an expected date for doing so.

Table 5

Two major reasons—inmate transfer and administrative discharge—accounted for a majority of major program noncompletions in fiscal year 2024, in contrast to fiscal years 2022 and 2023, when we found 3 major reasons for major program noncompletions—inmate transfer, administrative discharge, and canceled program group¹

(Unaudited)

Status	FY 2022		FY 2023		FY 2024	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Noncompletions						
Canceled program group ²	2,674	11.9%	2,761	10.3%	0	0.0%
Inmate transfer	3,116	13.9%	3,837	14.3%	5,047	19.0%
Administrative discharge	3,982	17.7%	4,020	15.0%	4,643	17.4%
Other reason ³	1,965	8.8%	1,974	7.4%	2,981	11.2%
Subtotal	11,737	52.3%	12,592	47.0%	12,671	47.6%
Other statuses						
Completions	9,843	43.8%	13,255	49.4%	13,006	48.9%
Still participating	868	3.9%	968	3.6%	941	3.5%
Subtotal	10,711	47.7%	14,223	53.0%	13,947	52.4%
Total	22,448	—	26,815	—	26,618	—

¹ The counts and percentages presented in this table are not comparable to the September 2021 performance audit findings, which included only 4 major programs, nor are they comparable to the noncompletion counts and percentage included in Tables 1 and 2 (see Chapter 4, page 18). Specifically, this table presents all the total nonunique major program enrollments, including noncompletions when the inmate was re-enrolled in and eventually completed the major program.

² We did not identify any canceled program group within the Department's fiscal year 2024 major program enrollment data (see recommendation 6a on pages e-6 through e-7 for more information).

³ Other noncompletion reasons include an inmate being released, an inmate failing the program, and an inmate refusing the program.

Source: Auditor General staff review of Department-provided data related to major self-improvement, education, and treatment programs for fiscal years 2024, 2023, and 2022, enrollments, and participation and completion status as of November 30, 2024, November 30, 2023, and November 30, 2022, respectively.

- b.** Research the causes for variation in major program noncompletions across prisons/prison units.

► Status: **Not implemented.**

Although the Department reported that it has identified system-wide causes for variation in major program noncompletions, it has not researched causes for variation in major program noncompletion across prisons and prison units for all major programs. Specifically, the Department reported that system-wide causes include inconsistencies in program completion information documented by its staff within ACIS, inmates failing or refusing to complete the program, and safety concerns that lead to inmate transfers. However, although the Department has data on major program noncompletions, it did not provide evidence of researching or analyzing this data to assess major program noncompletions across prison/units for all major programs. Additionally, the Department has not revised its Department Orders to require staff to research the causes for all major program noncompletions across prisons/prison units. By not researching or analyzing all major program noncompletion data by prison/unit, the Department may not be able to identify and address reasons for noncompletions, which could potentially impact its efforts to rehabilitate inmates. According to the Department and as explained in recommendation 6a, it plans to revise its monthly reports to provide major program noncompletion reasons by prison/unit but did not indicate an expected date for doing so.

- c.** Use this information to make changes, as needed, to its major program enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings to help reduce noncompletions.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

Although the Department has taken a step to use information it has gathered through reviews of data to make changes to its major program enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings to help reduce noncompletions, it has not gathered information by prison/prison unit. Specifically, the Department reported that through its monthly reviews, it identified that its staff were previously inappropriately using canceled program group when other noncompletion reasons better reflected reasons why an inmate did not complete the program. The Department further reported that after it identified this issue, it provided staff training on accurately entering program enrollment information into ACIS, such as noncompletions that previously would have resulted in a misclassified canceled program group. Therefore, as shown in Table 5, on page e-7, our review of Department-provided fiscal year 2024 major programming data found that 0 noncompletions were the result of a canceled program group. Instead, only 2 major reasons—inmate transfers and administrative discharge—accounted for a majority of noncompletions, contrasting fiscal years 2023 and 2022, where we found 3 major reasons, including canceled program group and the 2 previously mentioned.⁹

⁹ See footnote 7, page e-6, for more information regarding the Department's use of canceled program group.

Finally, our review found that approximately 48% of all nonunique enrollments resulted in a noncompletion, which is an increase in the rate of noncompletions over fiscal year 2023, when it had approximately 47% of all nonunique enrollments end in a noncompletion.¹⁰ Because of the 1% increase in the rate of nonunique noncompletions, continuing to assess the need for updates to its enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings can assist the Department in reducing noncompletions.

7. The Department should, in conjunction with recommendation 8 from our 2021 performance audit and recommendations 7 and 8 from our 2023 annual compliance review, continue to develop and implement a process to review enrollment, participation, and completion data for all major programs to:

a. Monitor all major programs data for unexpected values in time frames and dates, as well as identify duplications and make corrections accordingly.

► Status: **Implementation in process.**

In June 2025, the Department reported it identified some causes of unexpected values include errors when entering data into ACIS and system limitations, which prevents the Department from revising previous erroneous data entries. In response, the Department developed guidance regarding accurately entering information into ACIS to help reduce unexpected values in time frames and dates and minimize duplications, and reported that it began training its staff regarding this guidance. Additionally, the Department reported developing a process for monitoring the data for some major programs based on the guidance we provided for reviewing its data for unexpected values before providing it to us for review (see paragraph below). However, the Department does not use this process for monitoring all major program data for unexpected values in time frames and dates and to identify duplicates. By not using this process for monitoring and addressing all major program data for unexpected values, the Department remains at risk for continuing to have these unexpected values in its major program enrollment data and potentially inaccurate enrollment data, which could adversely impact its analysis.

In December 2024, we worked with the Department to provide guidance on identifying some of the unexpected values within its major program data prior to providing it to us for review. Using this guidance, the Department identified and removed unexpected values from the data. Our review of the fiscal year 2024 inmate programming data provided by the Department found it identified and removed 994 of 28,046, or approximately 3.5%, of all enrollments due to these enrollments being a duplicate or being unable to determine the completion/noncompletion status.¹¹ This represents an improvement from fiscal year 2023, when the Department did not identify or remove any enrollments from its major program data prior to our review.

¹⁰ There were 26,618 total nonunique enrollments in a major program in fiscal year 2024 and 26,815 total nonunique enrollments in fiscal year 2023. These numbers are not comparable to the numbers presented in Table 2 (see Chapter 4, page 18), because the numbers in the table reflect unique major program enrollments, that only count whether an inmate either eventually completed a program or did not complete the program after 1 or multiple attempts.

¹¹ Some reasons the Department may have been unable to determine the completion/noncompletion status of an enrollment include unexpectedly short and lengthy completion time frames or not entering a completion status into ACIS.

However, as part of our current review, we needed to remove an additional 434 of the 28,046 enrollments, or approximately 1.5%, due to these being duplicate enrollments or a re-enrollment in a program after a prior completion that the Department did not remove during its review. Additionally, the Department has not documented its process to review, identify, and correct all unexpected values in a Department Order or tech manual, included all reasons for unexpected values, or utilized this process for all major program data.

Finally, the Department reported it plans to further assess its data entry and quality assurance processes and determine if additional changes are needed to Department procedure and staff trainings to improve its data entry and prevent these unexpected values, but did not indicate an expected date for completing its review and making these changes. This guidance and any further changes to the Department's data quality assurance processes may help address data errors, including our finding that the Department did not enter programming data for its postsecondary education programs (for more information, see Chapter 5, pages 20 through 22).

- b.** Research the causes for these unexpected values and other identified unexpected values.

- ▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**

- See explanation for recommendation 7a.

- c.** Use this information to make changes, as needed, to its major program enrollment policies, guidance, and/or trainings, or identify and implement system updates that are needed to prevent errors.

- ▶ Status: **Implementation in process.**

- See explanation for recommendation 7a.

Department's annual drug and alcohol treatment report

The Department's 2024 annual drug and alcohol treatment report that it submitted to the Legislature, Governor, and Secretary of State according to A.R.S. §41-1604.14 is found on the next 13 pages.



Drug and Alcohol Treatment Programs Annual Report



Enhancing public safety across Arizona
through modern, effective correctional
practices and meaningful engagement.

#REIMAGININGCORRECTIONS

Table of Contents

1. A description of each program, including whether the program is for offenders who are imprisoned or for offenders who are on community supervision or parole.
2. The number of offenders who are currently receiving services from a program and the total number of offenders who received services over the previous twelve months.
3. The cost per offender for each program and the source of the monies that are used.
4. The name of each drug and alcohol treatment program provider
9. Program Comparisons

The following information is submitted pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes § 41-1604.14. A.R.S. § 41-1604.14 (A) mandates the department file an annual report by December 1 regarding all drug and alcohol treatment programs available to offenders under the jurisdiction of ADCRR.

41-1604.14. Drug and alcohol treatment programs: annual report

A. On or before December 1 each year, the director shall report on the drug and alcohol treatment programs available to offenders in this state who are under the jurisdiction of the department. The report shall include:

1. A description of each program, including whether the program is for offenders who are imprisoned or for offenders who are on community supervision or parole.
2. The number of offenders who are currently receiving services from a program and the total number of offenders who received services over the previous twelve months.
3. The cost per offender for each program and the source of the monies that are used.
4. The name of each drug and alcohol treatment program provider.
5. A comparison of the drug and alcohol treatment programs that are offered to:
 - (a) Offenders who are in a department facility.
 - (b) Offenders who are in a private prison that contracts with the department.
 - (c) Offenders who are on community supervision or parole.

B. The report shall be submitted to the governor, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives and a copy of this report shall be provided to the secretary of state.

1. A description of each program, including whether the program is for offenders who are imprisoned or for offenders who are on community supervision or parole.

Moderate Treatment: Three-Month Program

For offenders who are imprisoned

Moderate Treatment is a state-funded substance use treatment program. Participants complete a total of ninety-six hours of treatment. The curriculum for this program is “Living in Balance” from Hazelden Publishing. “Living in Balance” is a research-based, flexible, practical, and user-friendly substance use treatment curriculum that helps clients address issues in lifestyle areas that may have been neglected during addiction. “Living in Balance” was developed by Danya International with funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Women in Recovery (A021 - Moderate Treatment)

For offenders who are imprisoned

Women In Recovery is a state-funded substance use treatment program. Participants complete a total of ninety-six hours of treatment which is broken down into three months by meeting four days a week for two hours and fifteen minutes per session. The curriculum for this program is “Living in Balance” from Hazelden Publishing. “Living in Balance” is a research-based, flexible, practical, and user-friendly substance use treatment curriculum that helps clients address issues in lifestyle areas that may have been neglected during addiction.

In addition to the “Living in Balance” curriculum, “A Woman’s Addiction Workbook” by Lisa Najavits is utilized for gender-specific issues.

Outpatient Treatment

For offenders who are imprisoned

Outpatient treatment is a state-funded substance use treatment program. This offering will be provided to clients based on the counselor’s assessment of the necessary care level. Participants will complete fifteen hours of treatment, meeting once a week for one hour per session for fifteen weeks. The curriculum for this program is “Living in Balance” from Hazelden Publishing. “Living in Balance” is a research-based, flexible, practical, and user-friendly substance use treatment curriculum that helps clients address issues in lifestyle areas that may have been neglected during addiction. “Living in Balance” was developed by Danya International with funding from NIDA.

Intensive Outpatient Treatment

For offenders who are imprisoned

Intensive outpatient treatment is a state-funded substance use treatment program. This program meets four times a week for two hours per session lasting for six months. Clients complete two hundred hours of treatment. The curriculum for this program is “Living in Balance” from Hazelden Publishing. “Living in Balance” is a research-based, flexible, practical, and user-friendly substance use treatment curriculum that helps clients address issues in lifestyle areas that may have been neglected during addiction. “Living in Balance” was developed by Danya International with funding from NIDA.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)

For offenders who are imprisoned

RSAT is a six-month intensive treatment program geared toward substance use, mental health, and healing from trauma to develop prosocial behavior and life skills that will ensure inmates are prepared to live a successful life upon release. The RSAT combines four strategic treatment models (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Peer Support, Community as a Method, and Reentry Planning) and is based on the risk-needs and responsivity principles. Members live in a community with one another and are engaged in programs with Recovery Support Specialists and Licensed Substance Abuse Counselors for four hours a day. Additionally, members engage in homework, a small job that benefits the community, and other prosocial activities for four hours a day. These activities can include elective classes such as money management, ESCO Institute, HVAC, Veterans Group, The Art of Conflict Management, Customs of The World, Lifelong Health, and a small business class. One of the primary goals is to successfully prepare inmates with substance use disorders to reenter the community with the hope of reduced recidivism and increased public safety.

DUI Program

For offenders who are imprisoned

The DUI Program is a licensed program by the Arizona Department of Health Services and incorporates the screening, education, and treatment required by statute for inmates who have been convicted of a DUI offense. Screening is completed utilizing alcohol and drug assessments required by the ADHS. DUI classes are held four days per week and last two hours. Participants enrolled will complete sixteen hours of DUI education which consists of the six “Flex Modules” by The Change Companies. There is a pretest and post-test to measure gains in knowledge about DUI, drug/alcohol consumption, and penalties. The modules cover the eleven knowledge areas listed in R9-20-109. DUI treatment is a minimum of twenty hours up to fifty-six hours based on the severity of the addiction diagnosis, criminal history, and current assessments.

Most inmates incarcerated at ADCRR have numerous DUI arrests and will be eligible for the entire fifty-six hours of treatment. Treatment consists of twelve modules from the “Living in Balance” curriculum on a variety of topics including triggers, emotions and behaviors, social interactions, and relapse prevention. As each section of the program is completed it is entered into the MVD portal to assist the inmate in regaining their driving privileges. Female participants also incorporate “Women in Recovery: Understanding Addiction” by Stephanie Covington as a supplement to the normal curriculum to address gender-specific issues with alcohol and drug use.

Transition Program

For offenders on community supervision or parole

Transition Program funding was established in 2003 for reentry programming to non-DUI offenders. This program stipulates that ADCRR contracts with a private or nonprofit entity to provide eligible offenders transitional services. Inmates who are deemed eligible receive an early supervised release of up to 90 days to complete the program. The current contract is held by Sage Counseling and New Freedom, Inc.

Maricopa Reentry Center (MRC)

For offenders on community supervision or parole

The MRC aims to facilitate successful community reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals under their supervision by providing critical programs and services. MRC offers substance use treatment, cognitive classes, employment assistance, life skills training, and sanctions as an alternative to reincarceration for those who violated their supervision terms. Essential MRC programs include a 21-day Motivational Enhancement Program with restriction and psychoeducation for violators, and a 90-day intensive substance use treatment program utilizing evidence-based curriculums.

Residential Community Behavioral Modification (RCBM) Program

For offenders on community supervision or parole

The RCBM Program is a 90-day, 3-phase reentry program for parolees struggling with substance use. It focuses on recovery, abstinence from all mind-altering substances, and views relapsing as a learning opportunity. RCBM provides evidence-based group therapy, individual counseling, case management, housing, meals, activities, resources, and incentive programs. Phase 1 involves 15 hours of counseling on life skills and coping mechanisms along with case management for benefits and workforce development. Phase 2 includes 9 counseling hours on overcoming stressors and balancing independence, plus case management for aftercare and housing. Phase 3 consists of 6 counseling hours on stressors and relapse prevention, case management, and requires employment. The goal is to assist clients with successful reentry and continued recovery from substance use.

Community Accountability Program (CAP)

For offenders on community supervision or parole

CAP is a post-release program funded by the state spirit tax and delivered through contracted services, previously a legislative program that expired in 2013. CAP provides cognitive behavioral-based counseling with enhanced accountability through electronic monitoring services like GPS and transdermal alcohol detection. It is a proactive case management intervention strategy by ADCRR to assist individuals needing cognitive restructuring/treatment and oversight due to criminogenic behaviors and factors. The program aims to provide enhanced community supervision and management for higher-risk individuals released from incarceration. The current statewide CAP contract is held by Prodigy Healthcare.

Set for Success (SFS)

For offenders on community supervision or parole

The SFS Program is designed for clients designated as Seriously Mentally Ill to assist them in obtaining ongoing and appropriate levels of AHCCCS services within a 90 day period or sooner. Assisting the offender with navigating the system and overcoming obstacles to access and utilizing services to which they are entitled.

2. The number of offenders who are currently receiving services from a program and the total number of offenders who received services over the previous twelve months.

Program	Number of Offenders Currently Receiving Services	Total Number of Offenders Who Received Services Over the Previous 12 Months
Moderate Treatment	197	1045
Women in Recovery	15	93
Outpatient Treatment	378	1,547
Intensive Outpatient	142	433
Residential Substance Abuse Treatment	140	446
DUI	85	596
Transition Program	1,525	5,737
Maricopa Reentry Center	60	684
Residential Community Behavioral Modification Program	81	1,039
Community Accountability Program	209	2,850
Set for Success	28	286

3. The cost per offender for each program and the source of the monies that are used.

Program	Cost Per Offender	Funding Source
Moderate Treatment	\$7,497.00	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
Women in Recovery	\$7,497.00	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
Outpatient Treatment	\$1,124	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
Intensive Outpatient	\$8,096	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
Residential Substance Abuse Treatment	\$7,497.00	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
DUI	\$5,397	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund) and Non-Appropriated Fund (Federal Grant Fund - 2000)
Maricopa Reentry Center (MRC)	\$4,773	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund - 2204) and Non-Appropriated Funds (Community Corrections Enhancement Fund - 2395 and DOC Revolving Fund - 2515)
Prodigy/Community Accountability Program (CAP)	Varies due to client needs at assessment	ADCRR Non-Appropriated Fund (DOC Revolving Fund - 2515)
Transition Program	Varies due to client needs at assessment	ADCRR Lump Sum Appropriation (General Fund and Transition Program Fund - 2379)
Set for Success	Varies due to client needs at assessment	General fund appropriations

4. The name of each drug and alcohol treatment program provider

Location	Position	Staff member	License
ADCRR	Addiction Treatment Administrator	Amanda Adkins	LPC-15543
ADCRR	DUI Program Manager	Scott Adams	LISAC-15188
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Trudy Craig	LASAC-15436
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Rosette Codner	LAC-21535
ADCRR	Program Manager	Rohno Geppert	LISAC-10044
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Sarah Dunmire	LISAC-155266
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Brittany Marklewitz	LPC-19854
ADCRR	Program Manager	Sharon Sherrill	LISAC-15059
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Carl Bailey	LMSW-19887
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Kimberly Speed	LMSW-20492
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Audra Jalbert	LPC-19055
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Nicole Rogers	LISAC-15207
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Loura Gboeah	LAC-20972
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Susan Galindo	LMSW-18789
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Eduviges Amado	LAC-21051
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Sultana Pecherskaya	LAC-18938
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Stephen Malsberger	LISAC-0768
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Sandra Hall-Braga	LISAC-1312
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Kalina Christle	LASAC-15463
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Christopher Pieper	LISAC-15166
ADCRR	Program Manager	Rachel Hilgeford	LPC-10876
ADCRR	Program Manager	Nicole Rogers	LISAC-15207
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Randi Whittington	LAAC-15467
ADCRR	Senior Substance Abuse Counselor	Marla Brewer	LAAC-15368

PRC	CSACSR	Susan Treiber	LASAC-15404
PRC	CSACSR	Kae Rehman	LPC-16469
MRC	CSACSR	Erin Urias	LMSW-18988
MRC	CSACSR	Sandra Dyson	LASAC-15488

PRC/MRC	Program Manager (MRC and PRC)	Timothy McCann	LISAC-155274
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Alexander, Karla Denise	no license
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Casale, Toni A	no license
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Clark, Natalie Marie	No license
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Estrella, Francsico Javier	No license
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Holland, Shawanna Latrice	No license
La Palma	TREATMENT COUNSELOR	Beltran, Yolanda	LIAC-15053
La Palma	Clinical Supervisor	Kirk Weddle	No license
La Palma	Clinical Supervisor	Wofford, Denise Renee	LPC-20365
CACF	Substance Abuse Counselor	Nicoletti, Graciela	No license
CACF	Substance Abuse Counselor	Wuertz, Darinka	No license
CACF	Substance Abuse Counselor	Walker, Lesa	No license
Phoenix West	Substance Abuse Counselor	Maas, Albert	LAC-15122
Phoenix West	Substance Abuse Counselor	Scott, Rodney	LACT-15164
Red Rock	TREATMENT MANAGER	Ibarra, Rosalinda	LIAC-15068
Red Rock	Treatment Counselor	Shelly Ann Brown	No license
Red Rock	Treatment Counselor	Lopez, Diana Marie	No license
Red Rock	Treatment Counselor	Powell SR, Kevin Draket	No license
Red Rock	Treatment Counselor	Wright, Michael	No license
Kingman	Substance Abuse Manager - CoC	Cartwright, Julianne	LISAC-15075
Kingman	Substance Abuse Supervisor - CoC	Moore (Casper), Kimberly	No license
Kingman	Substance Abuse Supervisor - CoC	Bailey Carol	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Dickinson, Vickie	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Geendot, Leanna	LSAT-15181
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Gonzales, Alicea	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Hernandez-Romero, Cecilia	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Hamilton, Evan	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Larson, Lisa	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	McDonough, Brandon	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Rahm, Joshua	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Ramsey, Aryn	No license

Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Remillard, Jeremi	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Roy, Jonathan	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Sharp, Todd	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Thompson, Julie	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Durbin, Matthew	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Stevens, Cory	No license
Kingman	Behavioral Health Specialist -CoC	Lewis, Debra	No license
Sage	Treatment Counselor	Lucas, Nicole	No license
Sage	Treatment Counselor	Englert, Caitlin	No license
Sage	Treatment Counselor	Berezny, Katy	No license
Sage	Treatment Counselor	Amaya, Esai	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	Newlon, Kristen	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	Hernandez, Leo	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	Matekel, Caitlin	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	McKay, Rachel	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	Melero, Valerie	No license
New Freedom	Treatment Counselor	Pozzi, Morgan	No license

9. Program Comparisons

Agency	Services Provided	Number of Staff	Number of Clients Served in the last 12 Months
ADCRR	DUI, MAT, Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, MAT	35 (25 state employees, 10 contracted employees)	3,061
Private Prisons	DUI, Moderate Treatment, Intensive Treatment, MAT (at the Red Rock facility only)	37	898
Community Reentry or Parole	MRC, PRC, Transition Program, CAP, Set for Success	7 (MRC and PRC)	4,741

A comparison of programs available to offenders at state facilities, private prison facilities, and in the communities demonstrates the following:

1. **Program Type** - ADCRR, private prisons, and our Reentry Centers offer evidence-based programs for the incarcerated population. All of these programs are at least three months in length. The institutional-based facilities offer longer and more intensive treatment on a limited basis. Currently, ADCRR has thirty-five counseling staff (when including our ten contracted providers inside the state institutions) and the private prisons combined have thirty-seven counseling staff. With similar staffing numbers, ADCRR provides over two thousand more enrollments per year in substance use counseling.
2. **Medication Assisted Treatment** - All of the state facilities as well as the noted programs available in the community are also providing MAT as needed for opioid and alcohol dependencies. Only one private prison facility offers this service at this time.
3. **Staff Qualifications** - ADCRR programs are run by licensed professionals, such as social workers, addiction counselors, or licensed professional counselors. Contractors with Sage and New Freedom, private prisons, and community agencies utilize unlicensed staff receiving clinical oversight by a behavioral health professional.

Scope and methodology

The Arizona Auditor General has conducted a review of the Department's compliance in several areas pursuant to A.R.S. §41-1610.02.

We used various methods to meet the review's objectives. These methods included reviewing State statutes, Department Orders, and other Department documentation; interviewing Department staff; and reviewing Department-provided data on inmates released between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, and inmates who were enrolled in a program during fiscal year 2024.¹ In addition, we used the following specific methods to meet this review's objectives:

- ▶ To review the Department's compliance with statutory requirements related to earned release credits and assess whether the Department followed its processes for identifying eligible inmates and calculating earned release credits, we reviewed inmate information in the Department's ACIS system for a stratified random sample of 31 of 5,066 inmate releases under earned release credit programs between August 1, 2024, and November 30, 2024, including sentence length, sentence beginning dates, and number of jail credits.²
- ▶ To review the Department's compliance with the inmate transition program's eligibility, release, contracting, reporting, and notification requirements, we:
 - Reviewed inmate information for a stratified random sample of 20 of 31 inmates eligible for the transition program in the Department's ACIS system and other documentation related to transition program eligibility, such as inmates' signed transition program agreements.
 - Reviewed inmate documentation related to victim notification for a random sample of 3 of 44 inmates released to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024.³

¹ We reviewed inmates who were released to the transition program between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024, which was the time period immediately following the release of our 2024 annual compliance review in July 2024. We reviewed inmate major programming data for fiscal year 2024, including comparing this data to the fiscal years 2022 and 2023 data that we reviewed as part of our 2023 and 2024 annual compliance reviews, respectively.

² We received a data file from the Department that included information, including Department-identified release type, on 5,133 inmate releases from prison between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024. We evaluated this data, including comparing it to Department data sets we reviewed and analyzed as part of prior annual compliance reviews, and determined it was sufficiently reliable for our compliance review purposes. However, we removed 67 inmates from the data for several reasons, such as death and home arrest. This resulted in a count of 5,066 inmate releases between August 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024. From this count of 5,066 inmate releases, we reviewed a stratified random sample of 31 inmates, including 2 of 3 inmates released under new code, 15 of 1,534 inmates released to the transition program without drug possession release, 5 of 235 inmates released to the transition program under drug possession release, 4 of 3,172 inmates released under other release types without drug possession release, and 5 of 122 inmates released under other release types under drug possession release. As noted in Chapter 1, the 31 inmate releases we reviewed included 11 inmates who were not eligible for earned release credits and were required to serve the full term of imprisonment imposed by the court (see Chapter 1, page 7, footnote 6, for additional information).

³ Within the count of 5,066 inmate releases, as discussed in footnote 2, we identified all 44 inmates whose victims requested notification of an inmate's impending release and reviewed a random sample of 3 of 44 inmates.

- Reviewed the Department’s fiscal years 2023 and 2024 annual transition program reports.
- ▶ To compile and analyze information on inmates’ enrollment, participation in, and completion of rehabilitative, self-improvement, and treatment programs provided by the Department, we obtained and reviewed Department-provided enrollment data for all inmates who enrolled in self-improvement, education, and treatment major programs during fiscal year 2024, and data on the participation or completion status for each enrollment as of November 30, 2024.⁴ In addition:
 - To assess the accuracy of the Department’s major program enrollment data, we reviewed a stratified random sample of major program enrollments against Department’s ACIS records related to those major program enrollments to identify any information to determine if those enrollments should be included in the data.⁵
 - To account for re-enrollments (instances of the same inmate taking the same major program again after not completing the major program on their first attempt), we counted only whether an inmate eventually completed the major program after 1 or more attempts or was still participating as of November 30, 2024 (see Table 1, page 18).⁶
 - To assess reasons for major program noncompletions, we reviewed all major program enrollments from Department-provided data for fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024.
- ▶ To assess the impact of the Department’s lack of a documented process for entering postsecondary education major program data into ACIS—including enrollments in associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and master’s degree programs—we reviewed all 85 Department-provided fiscal year 2024 postsecondary education major program completions.

We also reviewed the ACIS records for a judgmental sample of 5 of these 85 inmates who we identified as being potentially eligible for early release within a year of our review to identify if the completion of a postsecondary education program that was not documented in ACIS affected their drug possession release eligibility. Specifically, these 5 inmates had not been released from prison as of March 2025, were approved or potentially eligible for drug possession release, and had an expected release date between March 2025 and March 2026.

⁴ We conducted various reliability tests of the data, such as identifying duplicate entries, inconsistent dates, and unexpected time frame values. Although we identified some data discrepancies that affected approximately 5% of the total major program enrollments (see page g-2, footnote 5), we determined the data to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes of reporting major program enrollments, participation, and completion.

⁵ We received Department data for 28,046 major program enrollments in fiscal year 2024, and the Department identified 994 of these major program enrollments as data discrepancies, including unexpected values in the completion date, the noncompletion date, the enrollment status, or the length of enrollment. Our review of the data identified another 432 enrollments that included data discrepancies. As a result, we excluded 1,426 total enrollments with data discrepancies. This resulted in 26,620 major program enrollments. We further reviewed a stratified random sample of 11 of 26,620 major program enrollments and identified an additional 2 enrollments that we subsequently excluded because we could not determine the completion status. As a result, these various reviews of the data resulted in excluding 1,428 enrollments from the total of 28,046 fiscal year 2024 major program enrollments, or approximately 5%, of the total major program enrollments reflected in the data.

⁶ For the 26,618 major program enrollments determined to be sufficiently accurate for analysis purposes, there were 3,656 re-enrollment occurrences. When reporting the unique major program enrollment counts, only the eventual completion, noncompletion, or still participating status was reported. This resulted in 22,962 unique major program enrollments.

- ▶ To review the Department's compliance with earned release credit reporting requirements, we reviewed the Department's fiscal year 2024 quarterly report.
- ▶ To determine whether the Department has developed and implemented policies related to industry-recommended reporting guidelines and for producing statutorily required reports, we met with Department staff to view Department processes and reviewed draft Department Orders.
- ▶ To review the Department's compliance with statutory reporting requirements related to drug and alcohol treatment programs, we reviewed the Department's fiscal year 2024 drug and alcohol treatment programs report and a report distribution email.

We selected our samples to provide sufficient evidence to support our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Unless otherwise noted, the results of our testing using these samples were not intended to be projected to the entire population.

When relying on Department-provided data to support our findings and conclusions, we performed certain tests to ensure the data was sufficiently valid, reliable, and complete to meet the audit objectives. Unless otherwise noted, we determined the Department-provided data was sufficiently valid, reliable, and complete for audit purposes.

We express our appreciation to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry, Director and staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout the audit.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

The subsequent pages were written by the Department to provide a response to each of the findings and to indicate its intention regarding implementation of each of the recommendations resulting from the audit conducted by the Arizona Auditor General.

August 5, 2025

Lindsey Perry, CPA, CFE
Auditor General
2910 N. 44th Street, Suite 410
Phoenix, AZ 85018-7271

Dear Ms. Perry:

Attached is the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry's response to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation & Reentry's Annual Compliance Review of Specific Statutory and Policy Requirements pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §41-1610.02.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Thank you,



Ryan Thornell, Ph.D.
Director

Chapter 5: The Department failed to enter postsecondary education enrollment and completion data into ACIS for approximately 18 months and lacks a documented process for doing so, increasing the risk that it does not release some inmates early as required by statute.

Department response: The Auditor General's finding is Agreed to ▾

Response explanation: The position was frozen for 18 months, and when we were allowed to hire, we filled the position and updated the data—no inmates were negatively impacted.

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement documented processes and/or guidance that include steps and time frames for collecting and accurately entering all postsecondary education program data and specify roles and responsibilities for these steps.

Department response: The audit recommendation Agreed to ▾

Response explanation: This responsibility is outlined in the Education Program Manager's job description, and the entries are expected to occur on a monthly basis.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement documented processes and/or guidance that require a risk-based supervisory review of postsecondary education data entry to ensure data is timely entered.

Department response: The audit recommendation Agreed to ▾

Response explanation: EPCRR will create a standard work document that describes the steps and deadlines for entering college enrollment and completion data into ACIS. The Research Department will provide a monthly college data report that EPCRR administrators will use to ensure the information is entered and updated by the established monthly deadline.

Recommendation 3: Enter all postsecondary education program data into ACIS, including data after September 2023, as required by its documented processes and/or guidance.

Department response: The audit recommendation Agreed to ▾

Response explanation: Completed, and data is updated monthly.