

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

Department has established processes for the statutory responsibilities we reviewed, including assessing youths' educational needs, but had deficiencies in some processes, including not always following its requirements for supervising youth on parole and not ensuring that youth in its work incentive program were paid as required by statute

Audit purpose

To respond to the statutory sunset factors and determine if the Department complied with statute and/or its policies and procedures or followed recommended practices for supervising youth on parole, compensating youth for work performed, protecting information technology (IT) systems/data, measuring/reporting youth recidivism, monitoring youth exclusions, addressing youth grievances, and investigating/resolving employee misconduct allegations.

Key findings

The Department:

- Is responsible for the supervision, rehabilitation, treatment, and education of delinquent youth who pose a threat to public safety and have been committed to its care by the Superior Court of Arizona.
- Has processes for assessing youths' educational needs, preparing youth for release on parole, including developing youths' parole conditions and coordinating post release services, and providing specialized care for youth with mental illnesses.
- Did not always follow its requirements for supervising youth on parole, including not conducting all required contacts and ensuring youth were administered all required drug tests, or ensure that youth participating in its work incentive program were paid as required by statute but revised its policies to address some issues during the audit.
- Developed statutorily required IT security policies and a plan for implementing these policies during the audit.
- Has processes for measuring and reporting youth recidivism and reviewing compliance with its exclusion policy but can enhance these processes by further aligning its youth recidivism measurement and reporting with some additional practices recommended by literature and by using electronic data on the use of exclusion.
- Has a process for resolving youth grievances but did not timely assign and resolve some grievances and lacks a formal supervisory review process for staff who oversee youth grievances.

Key recommendations

The Department should:

- Ensure that parole officers follow parole supervision requirements.
- Continue to implement its revised youth work experience policies and procedures and written plan for implementing its newly developed IT security policies.
- Evaluate and revise its method for measuring and reporting recidivism to further align it with additional practices recommended by literature and modify and implement its policies regarding youth exclusion.
- Follow its time frames for reviewing and resolving youth grievances and develop and implement youth grievance supervisory review policies and procedures.