

ARIZONA JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Request for Council Action

Date Action Requested:	Type of Action Requested:	Subject:
December 5, 2007	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Formal Action/Request <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Auditor General Recommendations: Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Treatment

FROM:

Rob Lubitz, Director Juvenile Justice Services Division
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

DISCUSSION:

The Auditor General's Office has completed two performance audits of the AOC related to juvenile detention and juvenile treatment. These reports include a number of findings and recommendations. The AOC is seeking general guidance from the Council as to whether it concurs with the recommendations and whether it wishes to instruct the AOC to work with the juvenile courts to develop proposals that address the recommendations.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

The Council will be asked to give general direction to the AOC and juvenile courts to proceed with the work up of proposals to implement the specific recommendations the Auditor General is making and that the Council agrees with.



Supreme Court

STATE OF ARIZONA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

Ruth V. McGregor
Chief Justice

David K. Byers
Administrative Director
of the Courts

November 27, 2007

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

Dear Ms. Davenport,

Enclosed you will find our response to the recommendations in your juvenile treatment audit report.

The auditors recommendations to strengthen the risk and needs assessment process and to improve case planning align well with efforts already underway by the AOC and the local juvenile courts. Most recently, Columbia University re-validated the current risk assessment instrument. In addition, the AOC is working with the local juvenile courts to revamp the needs assessment instrument to identify and target case planning, supervision, and treatment interventions for those youth who are most at risk of re-offending. Furthermore, the AOC has partnered with the Vanderbilt University Center for Evaluation and Research Methodology to incorporate evidence-based practices into the delivery of treatment services with the goal of reducing juvenile recidivism.

We are also pleased the auditors have concluded the AOC has established a thorough process to contract with treatment service vendors, although we recognize there is still room for improvement in the monitoring of vendors. Over the years, AOC has strived to maintain a cost effective balance between the need to appropriately monitor vendors and the overarching goal of providing effective treatment services to youth.

We appreciate the audit work and the cooperation and professionalism of your staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Byers", written over a horizontal line.

David K. Byers, Administrative Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

Enclosure

**Administrative Office of the Courts
Juvenile Treatment Services Audit
Response to Auditor General Recommendations**

Finding 1

1. The AOC should seek the Arizona Judicial Council's direction regarding the need to develop and implement policies and procedures regarding the risk and strengths/protective factors assessments, case planning, and monitoring the delivery of treatment services to juveniles, as necessary.

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

2. If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop and implement policies and procedures, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to develop policies and procedures regarding the completion of the risk assessment. These policies and procedures should:
 - a. Prescribe the time frame for completing this assessment and allow for instances to potentially complete one risk assessment if multiple referrals occur within a specified time frame;
 - b. Recommend how a juvenile's risk assessment should be used to determine an appropriate level of supervision for juveniles on probation and if the juvenile should receive more aggressive treatment services; and
 - c. Determine whether the juvenile should receive needs and/or strengths/protective factors assessments based on the juvenile's risk assessment.

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

3. The AOC should continue its efforts to evaluate and revise its needs assessment to better meet best practices and to provide a useful, easy tool for probation officers.

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

4. If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to evaluate the approach for assessing strengths/protective factors, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to ensure this approach is consistent with best practices and establish policy requiring the completion of a strengths/protective factors assessment.

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

5. If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop and implement policies and procedures guiding the creation of case plans for juveniles, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to develop and implement such policies and procedures for case plans which are consistent with best practices. These policies and procedures should require that case plans:

- a. Address prioritized needs as identified in the risk and needs assessments;
- b. Include action steps for reaching defined goals and objectives;
- c. Use target dates for action steps, goals and objectives, and completion of services; and
- d. Receive regular supervisory review.

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

6. If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to define an appropriate time frame for completing a case plan, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to develop an appropriate case plan time frame.

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

7. If the Arizona Judicial Council approves the need to develop policies and procedures regarding monitoring delivery of treatment services to juveniles, the AOC should work with the county juvenile courts to establish policies and procedures that:

- a. Direct juvenile probation officers to monitor the delivery of treatment services received by juveniles, regardless of the funding source, to help ensure treatment services are addressing a juvenile's needs; and
- b. Require county juvenile courts to periodically reassess juvenile's risk and needs, and adjust case plans as needed.

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

8. Once the various policies and procedures recommended in this audit report are developed, the AOC should submit these policies and procedures to the Arizona Judicial Council for its review and approval.

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

9. The AOC should conduct a sufficient level of analysis during its county juvenile court Operational Reviews to determine whether assessments are conducted within the required time frames. It should also expand the reviews to include a review of county compliance with the additional policies, procedures, and practices recommended in this report once they have been implemented.

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

Finding 2

1. The AOC should fully implement its plan to improve its self audit process by requesting and reviewing a sample of case files with completed vendor forms to ensure vendor contract compliance.

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

2. The AOC should modify its vendor sampling approach to conduct annual monitoring site visits for a sample of its smaller vendors.

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

3. The AOC should finalize, implement, and follow its policies for the timely review and approval of vendor corrective action plans.

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