



A REPORT
TO THE
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Performance Audit Division

Performance Audit

Department of Economic Security

—Division of Children, Youth and Families—Child Protective Services—
On-the-Job Training and Continuing Education

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Auditor General

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April 27, 2006

Members of the Arizona Legislature

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Governor

Mr. David Berns, Director
Department of Economic Security

Transmitted herewith is a report of the Auditor General, A Performance Audit of the Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families—Child Protective Services—On-the-Job Training and Continuing Education. This report was conducted under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes §41-1966.

The report addresses the Division's need to further ensure that all new case managers receive consistent and effective on-the-job (i.e., field) training, and to finalize a formal continuing-education program for CPS staff. National child welfare organizations identify training as essential in providing quality services and achieving better outcomes for children and their families, and in retaining competent staff. Further, they recommend that agencies provide or require staff to receive continuing education to improve their skills and effectiveness.

Although the Division reports placing more emphasis on field training consistency, field training continues to differ between trainees. For example, case managers who completed training in 2005 found differences in the quantity and type of field training they received. A similar issue was reported in a 2003 performance audit (see Auditor General Report No. 03-09). To ensure that new case managers receive consistent and effective field training, the Division needs to adopt comprehensive training policies, finalize its draft field training manual, formally train all supervisors who provide field training, and better monitor whether trainees receive required and effective field training.

The report also found that the Division provides continuing education opportunities for its CPS staff and is developing a formal continuing-education program. In doing so, the Division should establish a timeline for completing the program, formalize its continuing education requirements in policy, ensure that staff receive the required continuing education, and monitor the program's effectiveness.

As outlined in its response, the Department of Economic Security agrees with both findings and plans to implement all of the recommendations.

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

This report will be released to the public on April 28, 2006.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

DD:Acm
Enclosure

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Office of the Auditor General has conducted a performance audit of the Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth and Families' (Division) efforts to ensure that new Child Protective Services (CPS) case managers state-wide receive consistent field training and to develop a continuing education program for CPS staff. This audit was conducted under the authority vested in the Auditor General by Arizona Revised Statutes §41-1966.

CPS' Training Institute provides most CPS caseworker training

The Division established the Child Welfare Training Institute in 2002 to administer state-wide training for CPS management and staff.¹ The Training Institute oversees the development and delivery of training for CPS staff, including case managers, supervisors, and management. The Child Welfare League of America (CLWA) standards identify staff training as an essential element in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Preparing staff to work with families in a child protective services context is a critical component of providing quality services and retaining competent staff.² Further, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement reports that training is an important part of achieving better outcomes for children and their families.³

To help provide quality services to Arizona's children and families, the Training Institute provides classroom training to new case managers, new supervisors, and other CPS staff, and provides ongoing training for all CPS staff on specialized CPS topics and on the Division's automated case management system, CHILDS. In addition to the Training Institute courses, CPS staff also receive training

Training Institute's Mission

... to provide timely, effective, and culturally sensitive professional development for the Division's staff and establish partnerships with others involved in child welfare to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.

Source: Division of Children, Youth and Families.

¹ The Division reports that before the Training Institute was established, a unit within the Division provided training.

² Child Welfare League of America. *CWLA Standards of Excellence for Services for Abused or Neglected Children and Their Families*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America, 1999.

³ Kanak, Susan, Susan Maciolek, and Mary O'Brien. *The Training System Assessment Guide for Child Welfare Agencies*. Portland, Maine: University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Policy, Institute for Child and Family Policy, 2005.

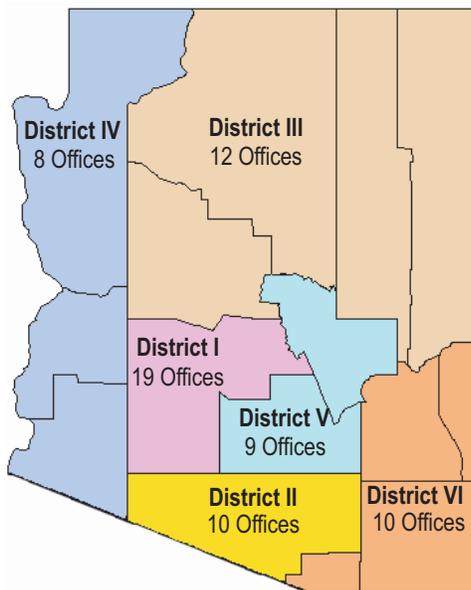
from the Department and from the Arizona Government University, such as training on performance evaluations, workplace violence, and general supervision.¹

Case manager training key focus of Training Institute

Most of the Training Institute's time and effort is spent training new case managers. Training Institute staff report that the purpose of this new staff training is to provide new case managers with a good foundation to perform their job responsibilities. The training is designed to provide practical experiences and covers the basics of case management, such as investigating a report of abuse or neglect, removing a child from the home, and developing and managing the case outcome goals and the family's progress toward meeting these goals. New case managers are to be provided approximately 22 weeks of training in the following three phases:

- **Pre-core training involves administrative items and job exposure**—During the first 2 weeks of employment, new case managers are provided general employment information and may also have an opportunity to observe some of the specific tasks they will be doing as a case manager. CPS case managers are assigned to work in one of 68 offices in 6 regional districts across the State (see Figure 1).² A trainer from the Training Institute who is assigned to the new case managers' district meets with the new case managers in a small group setting or one-on-one in their offices to provide this training. New case managers are provided with an overview of the district and office within the district to which they have been assigned. In addition, new case managers receive information about the Division's automated case management system and other basic district- and state-specific material relating to their new job, such as employment policies, timesheet and travel procedures, and the performance evaluation process. New case managers may also have the opportunity to shadow experienced CPS staff to observe firsthand some of the duties they will be required to perform, such as accompanying a case manager on a home visit or an investigation.

Figure 1: Number of Offices by District
Fiscal Year 2006



Source: Auditor General staff analysis of the Division of Children, Youth and Families' Directory of Child Protective Services Offices.

¹ Arizona Government University administers the State's centralized employee training activities. It develops standardized curriculum, provides agencies with information on outside training vendors, and partners with the State's community colleges and universities to provide college credit for some courses. Its courses include ethics, management development, health and safety, and time and project management.

² In addition to the 68 CPS offices, the Division has case management staff assigned to 7 nondepartment locations, such as the Mesa Center Against Family Violence.

- **Core training consists of classroom training**—Following pre-core training, new case managers receive 6 weeks of core classroom training. The 177 hours of classroom training are primarily provided by Training Institute staff and cover the basics of case management, such as investigating a report of abuse or neglect, removing a child from the home, and developing and managing a case plan.¹ In January 2005, the Training Institute extended its case manager core training from 4 weeks to 6 weeks to add more training on CHILDS and more applicable, hands-on exercises, such as an exercise to identify the community and agency services that a family might need and an exercise on completing referrals for services to be provided to the child and/or the child's family. The Training Institute also modified the presentation of these topics to follow the “Life of a Case” model. In this model, the case management topics are presented following the development of a case, from the initial child abuse and neglect report to CPS’ state-wide, toll-free, 24-hour hotline, through the CPS investigation, provision of services, and removal, to case closure.

A new segment of this classroom training is begun approximately every 8 weeks in Phoenix, Tucson, and Prescott Valley.² The Training Institute attempts to assign new case managers to the training facility closest to their home office. However, this may not always be possible depending on the date when the case manager is hired and whether there is any space available in the facility closest to his/her home office.

Beginning in January 2006, case managers attending classroom training return to their home office after the third week for a 1-week field break. The Training Institute reports that this break was put in place to produce a better learning environment and to improve learning retention. This break week occurs after the new case managers have received training on topics such as interviewing, and building and maintaining relationships with clients. During the break week, new case managers have the opportunity to practice the information presented in the classroom training with experienced workers and to participate in actual case visits. The new case managers then return to the classroom to complete the case development training, which includes such topics as child removal, permanency planning, and working with the courts.

- **Field training involves providing on-the-job training**—The last and longest segment of the new case manager training program is the field training phase. Field training, which is to last approximately 13 weeks, is intended to allow new case managers to integrate and apply the knowledge they gained in classroom training while experiencing the day-to-day activities of work in the field. Each

¹ The Training Institute reports that it purchased its case manager training package from the Institute for Human Services in Ohio more than 10 years ago and has modified it for Arizona’s specific needs.

² The Prescott Valley location opened in October 2005.

Division's Field Training Checklist

1. Log on to the automated case management system while in the field.
2. Accompany an experienced case manager on two investigations and review their assessments of risk factors and child safety.
3. Conduct a joint interview with an experienced worker.
4. Observe a removal review staffing, i.e., a meeting of CPS staff and Foster Care Review Board representatives, to review the decision to remove a child from his/her home (as it applies to the worker's job function).
5. Observe a case manager on two home visits/placement visits.
6. Observe a case plan staffing, i.e., a meeting of CPS staff, the family, and other professionals as necessary, to develop or reassess the case outcome goals and the family's progress toward achieving them (as it applies to the worker's job function).
7. Observe a preliminary protective conference and hearing, i.e., dependency hearing.
8. Observe a report and review hearing, i.e., court review of the progress being made on the child's case (as it applies to the worker's job function).
9. Observe a Foster Care Review Board hearing.

Source: Division of Children, Youth and Families' CPS Pre/Post Core Exercise Checklist.

CPS case manager, whether new or experienced, works under the direct supervision of a CPS unit supervisor, and this supervisor often provides the field training or may have an experienced case manager assist the new case manager. In 2002, the Division established field training supervisors in each district, and these positions are responsible for overseeing the new case managers' development and coordinating with the case manager's unit supervisor to provide field training.¹

During field training, division policy limits the number of cases the new case managers may be assigned. Also, during the field training period, the new case managers are supposed to observe experienced case managers performing a variety of activities that are designed to help the new case managers understand their job responsibilities. The Division has developed a one-page field training checklist form that lists nine activities that new case managers are to perform or observe, such as accompanying an experienced case manager on two investigations (see text box at left).

In addition to the checklist activities, the Division has developed forms for the new case managers to complete as they observe experienced case managers performing tasks such as conducting an investigation or testifying at a court hearing. Although not required to be completed, these forms allow the new case managers to document their understanding of the activity's process, the techniques used by the case manager, and the reasons for the outcome.

Staffing and budget

To accomplish its mission, the Training Institute has several staff and three training facilities located around the State. The Training Institute, which as of April 2006 has a total of 26 full-time and 3 part-time positions with 7 vacancies, is led by an administrator who reports directly to the Division's Assistant Deputy Director. The remaining staff are divided into three main functional groups:

- **Classroom trainers**—The Training Institute has 14 full-time and 3 part-time positions, with 5 vacancies, to manage and provide classroom training. These

¹ The Training Institute coordinates the field training for new case managers in five of the six CPS districts. District 1 (Maricopa County) offers its own field training program. However, District 1 staff report that the District coordinates with the Training Institute on a regular basis and that its field training program is similar to the Training Institute's field training program.

trainers are divided into two units, with one covering the classroom training in Phoenix and the other covering the classroom training in Tucson and Prescott Valley.

- **Field trainers**—The Training Institute has 6 full-time positions to coordinate the field, or on-the-job, training provided to new case managers across the State.¹
- **Support staff**—The Training Institute has 5 full-time positions, with 2 vacancies, to provide training at the classroom sites and some centralized functions, such as scheduling and recordkeeping. The Training Institute is also making use of 1 temporary position to assist in this area.

The Division reported that in fiscal year 2005, the Training Institute had \$2.8 million of training costs. These costs include personal services and employee-related costs for both the Training Institute staff and for the new case managers during their 22-week training period. The Division indicates that these costs are primarily funded by the State's General Fund appropriations and federal foster care grant (Title IV-E) monies. Specifically, it reports that 54 percent of these training costs were funded by state appropriations, 45 percent were funded by federal monies, and the remaining 1 percent were funded from other sources, such as court and other fees deposited in the CPS Training Fund.

¹ As of March 2006, District 1 had 3 FTEs, with 1 vacancy, to provide field training to new case managers.

FINDING 1

Division needs to do more to ensure all new case managers receive consistent on-the-job training

The Division needs to take additional steps to ensure that new case manager field or on-the-job training does not continue to differ from trainee to trainee. Consistent with the Auditor General's 2003 performance audit finding, interviews with case managers who completed field training in 2005 found differences in both the quantity and type of field training they received. To ensure that new case managers receive consistent and effective training, the Division needs to adopt comprehensive training policies, finalize its draft field training manual, formally train all supervisors who provide field training, and better monitor whether trainees receive required and effective field training. Finally, the Division is considering whether unique training practices being piloted or used within some of the districts can be expanded to other districts.

Case managers' field training experiences continue to vary

The field training provided to new case managers continues to differ from trainee to trainee. Auditors first identified this problem in 2003. Despite some division efforts to address this concern, auditors' interviews with case managers found that inconsistencies continue to remain in both the quantity and type of field training provided.

Prior audit identified field training inconsistencies—A 2003 performance audit (see Auditor General Report No. 03-09) identified several concerns with training provided to new case managers, including that the field training provided differed from trainee to trainee. Specifically, interviews and a letter from a group of case managers indicated that trainees were not consistently given the opportunity to participate in the same type of on-the-job training activities, such as conducting an interview with clients. As a result, auditors recommended that the Division take

steps to ensure that the field portion of new case manager training is consistently implemented state-wide.

Case managers report receiving inconsistent field training—The Division needs to take additional steps to ensure that field training provided to trainees is consistent. Although the Division reports placing an increased emphasis on field training consistency by taking such steps as standardizing a nine-item checklist of activities that trainees are to experience during field training (as shown on page 4), these efforts have not been sufficient to resolve the problem. Rather, when 24 case managers who enrolled in new case manager training in calendar year 2005 were asked by auditors to describe the type of field training they received, their responses indicated that new case manager field training continues to differ from trainee to trainee. Specifically:

- **Variations in the quantity of training**—New case managers reported receiving different amounts of field training. For example, 10 of the 24 case managers' descriptions about the field training they received indicated that they received either a minimal amount or no field training. In contrast, 3 other case managers indicated that they received a large amount of field training. Additionally, case managers volunteered a variety of overall opinions about their field training, ranging from "worthless" to a "great experience."
- **Variations in field training activities**—Most case managers reported participating in certain important activities, but other important activities were not as consistently reported. For example, 21 of the 24 case managers indicated that they shadowed co-workers. Similarly, 15 of the 24 case managers indicated that they had met with their unit supervisor to discuss their progress on assigned cases, although sometimes it was at the case manager's request, rather than being initiated by the supervisor. However, other important opportunities were not as consistently mentioned. For example, only 9 of the 24 case managers stated that a co-worker or supervisor had accompanied them on job-related activities. In addition, only 5 of the 24 case managers reported being assigned a mentor or coach during field training, and 3 of 24 reported receiving hands-on instruction and practice with CHILDS.

Because field training is an important aspect of new case manager training, a lack of consistency may leave some case managers unprepared to perform some aspects of their jobs. In-line with child welfare literature and other states' training materials, the Division acknowledges that field training is one of the most important elements in preparing new staff who are responsible, in conjunction with their CPS unit supervisor, for determining whether child abuse has occurred, ensuring children's safety, and providing services to at-risk abused and neglected children

and their families. Without adequate training, new case managers' ability to meet these critical needs may be limited.

Division needs to expand guidance and oversight

The Division needs to do more to ensure that new case managers receive consistent and effective field training. First, because the quality and quantity of field training is dependent on the field training and unit supervisors who provide the training, the Division needs to develop comprehensive training policies and other written guidance, as well as provide formal training on this guidance to appropriate supervisors. Second, the Division needs to improve its monitoring method to help ensure that all new case managers receive consistent and effective field training.

Develop comprehensive guidance—The Division provides only limited written instructions for the unit and field training supervisors who provide the field training and needs to develop comprehensive training policies and finalize its draft field training manual. Although the focus, structure, and sequence of training is described in a training plan the Division submits to the federal government, the Division has not outlined these items in policy for its staff. Rather, the Division has only one policy related to training.¹ As a result, some case managers who auditors interviewed indicated that they only received field training or received almost all of their field training during their approximate 2-week, pre-core orientation period before attending the classroom core training. While it may be appropriate for case managers to receive some field training prior to the classroom training, receiving little or no field training after the classroom core training can result in trainees' being denied an opportunity to practice or apply the theoretical knowledge learned during the classroom training. Thus, trainees may not have as thorough an understanding of their jobs as possible. To ensure that staff are informed of training requirements, the Division should implement comprehensive training policies, including ones related to field training.

In addition, the Division needs to take steps to finalize its field training manual. In response to the Auditor General's 2003 recommendation to ensure the field training was implemented consistently state-wide, the Division indicated that it developed a draft of a field training manual that was being field-tested in two districts. However, the Division has been in the process of revising this manual for about 2 years and it remains substantially incomplete. For example, five of six chapters planned for the manual have not been finished. The Division reported that the delay is because the field training coordinator has limited time to complete the manual since he is also responsible for coordinating CPS supervisor training and an annual state-wide conference. As of January 2006, the Division reported that it plans to have the manual completed by June 2006. The timely completion of this

¹ This policy indicates that staff shall not be assigned cases until they have completed classroom training, but may be assigned a limited number of cases to facilitate learning during field training.

manual is especially important because field training can be provided by more than 100 unit supervisors located across the State. Without clear written guidance, the risk for inconsistency and ineffective field training is heightened.

Based on field training resource manuals developed for use in California, Colorado, and Nevada, the Division should ensure that its field training manual includes information on the following topics:¹

- **Overview of entire new case manager training program**—The Division’s manual should provide basic information about the entire new case manager training program, including an overview of the case manager core classroom training content. Because one of the purposes of field training is to reinforce or show how theoretical information taught in the classroom should be implemented in the field, supervisors need to be aware of what is taught in the classroom. This allows supervisors to use the field training experience to reinforce the classroom lessons.
- **Field training and unit supervisors’ roles and responsibilities**—The Division’s manual should clearly describe the various roles of those involved in providing new case manager field training. While the draft table of contents for the field training manual as of December 2005 suggests that the Division plans to include information on the field training supervisors’ roles and responsibilities, there is no mention of unit supervisors’ roles and responsibilities. Although it is important to provide information regarding the field training supervisors’ duties, it is also important to clearly define the training roles and responsibilities for the unit supervisors because they are primary field training providers. Seventeen of the 24 case managers auditors interviewed indicated that their unit supervisors were responsible for providing field training.
- **Training requirements and expectations**—The Division’s manual should include additional details describing the specific field training activities that should occur, the objectives that should be met, and the supervisors’ responsibilities related to ensuring that activities occur and objectives are met. Although the Division has developed a standardized checklist of nine activities trainees are to perform or observe during field training (as shown on page 4), additional detail would help strengthen and ensure field training is consistently provided. For example, one of the nine activities on the checklist calls for the trainee to “conduct a joint interview with an experienced worker,” but it does not detail what should be learned from this activity or what tasks the supervisor should perform. In comparison, California’s training manual’s steps related to conducting interviews provide more detail for both the trainee and the supervisor

¹ California, Colorado, and Nevada rely on local training units or trainees’ supervisors to provide field training and do not employ field training supervisors. In contrast, Arizona uses both field training supervisors and trainees’ unit supervisors to provide field training. Therefore, California, Colorado, and Nevada’s manuals are not directed to field training supervisors. Additionally, California and Nevada have published separate resource manuals for trainees. However, the supervisor/trainer and trainee manuals closely mirror each other.

such as “discuss your observations of the interview with the worker and/or your supervisor,” and “review the skills used by the worker and give feedback.” As the Division develops this additional detail, it will need to assess whether any corresponding changes will be needed on the field training checklist. For example, as the Division adds more activities that new case managers are to experience during field training, these additional activities will need to be added to the checklist.

- **Shadow forms**—The Division should ensure it includes some existing tools within its finalized field training manual. Specifically, the Division has created several forms that are already available for trainees to fill out as they attend certain meetings, hearings, and other events as a part of their field training. The forms help trainees to take notes and focus on important lessons to take away from their experience. The forms should be included in the field training manual in order to ensure that they are consistently used. In addition, as the Division develops additional detailed field training requirements and expectations, it will need to review these shadow forms and determine whether corresponding changes or additional shadow forms are needed. For example, if additional trainee tasks are developed, the Division should consider whether developing additional corresponding shadow forms would be helpful for trainees.

Provide formal training to field trainers—Once the training manual is finalized, the Division should provide formal training on how the manual should be implemented to all staff responsible for field training. Currently, neither the unit nor the field training supervisors receive formal instruction on how to provide field training to new case managers. Such training is especially important because field training is provided in division offices throughout the State by many different people.

The Division has several options for providing formal training to unit supervisors. First, the Division is in the process of revising the supervisor core training program that all new supervisors are encouraged to complete. While this training does not include information on field training, the Division reports that it could be added. However, because supervisor core training is provided only to new supervisors, the Division would also need to take steps to formally train existing supervisors. Alternatively, the Division could develop specialized training for unit supervisors dedicated to field training. For example, Pennsylvania requires supervisors to attend a specialized training session about field training.

Additionally, the Division will need to ensure that all field training supervisors are formally trained on how to implement the manual. There are fewer than ten field training supervisors state-wide, so it may not be cost-effective to develop a

classroom training program specifically for them. However, the Division should ensure the field training supervisors receive formal training in either a one-on-one or a group setting.

Improve monitoring of field training consistency and effectiveness—

While the Division has taken steps to improve its oversight of field training activities, it needs to take the following additional steps to monitor whether field training is consistently provided and effective:

- **Better monitor consistency by ensuring checklists are submitted and reviewed**—Although the Division requires field training supervisors to submit copies of the completed field training files, including the checklists, to the Institute, this has not occurred. In April 2005, the Division mandated that field training supervisors send copies of completed field training files to the Institute. However, as of January 2006, only 12 files have been provided to the Institute. While the Division does not track the number of field training graduates, more than 180 trainees enrolled in case manager core training between January and July 2005. If these trainees did not leave division employment, they should have completed field training between July and December 2005, and thus their checklists should have been provided to the Institute.

Similarly, although the Division mandated the use of the checklist in May 2005 and sent an e-mail to all field training supervisors in September 2005 reminding them of the importance of using the checklist, there is still some confusion as to whether the checklist is mandatory. For example, two of the five field training supervisors auditors interviewed did not understand that trainees were required to complete the standardized checklist. Likewise, some case managers have only recently been asked to fill in the checklist although they had already completed their field training. As a result, they have to complete the checklist from memory, which may not be reliable. Therefore, as the Division develops its formal training policies, as recommended on page 9, it should include a statement that completing the checklist is a required component of field training.

Finally, the Division does not have a process to review field training documentation, such as the completed checklists, to ensure that the specified content has been provided. Once the Division begins to receive all of the checklists, it will need to review them on a routine basis and take appropriate actions, based on the results of the monitoring, such as providing feedback to the field training and unit supervisors on what additional training is necessary to ensure that required topics are covered.

- **Use forthcoming evaluation results to improve field training**—The Division contracted with Arizona State University in September 2005 to conduct an ongoing evaluation of its entire new case manager training program. Specifically, the University has developed a series of self-assessment forms for trainees and their supervisors to complete at multiple times throughout the entire new case manager training process, including core classroom and field training. The evaluation involves comparing these self-assessments, which measure trainees' knowledge and competencies, across time and analyzing the results to develop recommendations to improve the training program and case manager retention. The Division expects the results to be released in a series of reports beginning no later than June 2006. Therefore, the Division should ensure that it uses the evaluation's results to identify and then implement improvements to its new case manager training program, including field training.

Districts and training supervisors using unique and potentially helpful training tools

Several of the districts and field training supervisors have developed unique training tools that have the potential to help provide a more thorough, helpful field training experience. The Division is already aware of many of these practices and is considering whether they can be expanded to other districts. These unique district practices include:

- **Training unit**—District 2 operates a specialized field training unit dedicated to training and coaching new case managers. According to the Division, this unit was developed in cooperation with the Training Institute as a pilot for the Division as a whole. As space is available, new case manager trainees are placed into this specialized unit for 5 weeks of field training, rather than being assigned to a regular field unit. The new case manager trainees are assigned to an experienced case manager who serves as their coach. The coach, with the trainee's assistance, is assigned primary responsibility for working cases, sometimes from the CPS unit the trainee is permanently assigned to. An official from the training unit reports that initially the trainee primarily observes the coach working two to three cases. Over time, the trainee is expected to take on more

District 2 Field Training Unit Goals

- Apply classroom instruction to field work.
- Provide additional instruction in a real-time, hands-on setting.
- Assist the new worker to successfully integrate into the role of a CPS case manager.
- Further assess the new case manager's sustainability within CPS.
- Identify areas of need that must be addressed prior to assignment in the field unit.
- Reduce District 2 caseloads by completing investigations and managing ongoing cases during field training.
- Centralize, organize, and standardize CPS case manager training within District 2.

Source: Division of Children, Youth and Families' District 2 Field Training Unit Proposal.

responsibility for the cases, and work up to handling five to six cases. After 5 weeks, the trainees move to their permanently assigned CPS field units where they would be expected to continue to receive regular field training for the balance of their approximately 22-week training period. An evaluation of this training unit, which is being completed as a part of the larger Arizona State University evaluation, includes a comparison of the self-reported and supervisor assessments of the knowledge and skills of case managers who were assigned to this unit to similar assessments of case managers who were assigned to a regular field unit. According to the Division, the resulting report is expected to be issued no later than June 2006 and is expected to be used to help decide whether to expand the practice to other districts.

- **Other practices**—Some of the districts and field training supervisors have also developed other unique training tools. For example, District 3 provides organized group training to new case managers who will be working in on-call positions where they must respond to after-hour emergency calls. Such training may be of limited use in the urban areas where after-hour emergencies are often handled by a dedicated group of case managers. However, case managers in rural areas of the State may find it helpful. The field training supervisors and the field training coordinator have discussed this training as a part of their regular meetings, which occur approximately monthly. As a part of these discussions, another district's field training supervisor expressed an interest in providing this same training, and arrangements were made for the field training supervisors to cooperate.

Similarly, in order to provide more thorough training, District 6's field training supervisor developed an open-book test that she administers to all her trainees. It provides an opportunity for trainees to practice their skills in looking up reference material, such as district policies and procedures, as well as providing an opportunity for the field training supervisor to identify any topics on which the trainee needs additional instruction. Similarly, this field training supervisor has also developed a list of key forms used by case managers. She provides this list to all her trainees and expects them to create a reference file containing these forms.

Recommendations:

1. To ensure that staff are informed of training requirements, the Division should implement comprehensive policies regarding case manager training, including ones related to field training.
2. The Division should finalize its field training manual by June 2006.
3. The Division's finalized field training manual should include, but not be limited to, the following elements:
 - a. Overview of the entire new case manager training program.
 - b. Field training and unit supervisors' roles and responsibilities.
 - c. Training requirements and expectations.
 - d. Shadow forms.
4. After the detailed requirements and expectations are developed, the Division should review its field training checklist and shadow forms and make any needed corresponding changes.
5. After the field training manual is finalized, the Division should ensure it is consistently implemented by:
 - a. Providing the manual to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors.
 - b. Providing formal training to all staff who provide field training, including field training and unit supervisors, on their roles and responsibilities, including implementing the field training manual.
6. The Division should better monitor field training consistency by:
 - a. Enforcing the existing requirement that completed field training documentation, including field training checklists, be submitted to the Training Institute.
 - b. Developing a process to review whether the checklists have been completed and providing feedback to the field training and unit supervisors on what additional training is necessary to ensure that required topics have been covered.
7. The Division should use the results of the ongoing Arizona State University evaluation of the new case manager training program to identify and implement appropriate training program improvements, including improvements specific to field training.

FINDING 2

Division needs to continue efforts to implement continuing education program

The Division is working to develop a formal continuing education program to provide CPS staff with additional skills and knowledge so that they can more effectively perform their functions, including ensuring children's safety. The Division provides some continuing education opportunities and is working to develop a more formal continuing education program. While it does this, the Division needs to take a number of steps, including establishing a timeline for completing the program, formalizing its continuing education requirements in policy, establishing a mechanism for monitoring whether staff are receiving the required continuing education, and monitoring the program's effectiveness.

Continuing education important

Continuing education is important for CPS staff to acquire the additional skills and knowledge needed to continually enhance and improve their skills, abilities, and effectiveness in performing their duties. To ensure that staff members have the specialized skills and knowledge necessary to provide quality services, the Child Welfare League of America recommends that child protection agencies routinely provide in-service training and continuing education opportunities. Also, the National Association of Social Workers views continuing education as an essential activity for ensuring quality social work services for clients. Its continuing professional education standards recommend that social workers complete 48 hours of continuing education every 2 years. Further, auditors identified at least 5 states and the District of Columbia that have requirements for child welfare continuing education ranging from 6 to 40 hours annually, with 4 of these jurisdictions requiring at least 20 hours.¹ For instance, North Carolina requires that its child welfare services staff receive a minimum of 24 hours of training annually, while Pennsylvania requires child welfare staff who perform case management services to complete 20 hours of training annually.

¹ The five states auditors identified were Colorado, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming.

In late 2003, the Division received two recommendations for developing continuing education programs. Specifically, the Office of the Auditor General (see Auditor General Report No. 03-09) recommended that the Division develop a centralized continuing education program specifically focused on the CPS supervisors' professional development needs, such as how to mentor new employees, ensure adherence to division policy and procedure, make case-planning recommendations, and provide assistance to the staff they supervise. In addition, to revise and expand training opportunities for case managers, supervisors, and related staff, the Governor's Action Plan for Reform of Arizona's Child Protection System directed CPS to require all CPS staff to receive at least 24 hours of training annually.

Division provides some continuing education opportunities

Although the Division does not have a formal continuing education program, it does provide some continuing education opportunities for its case managers and supervisors. For example, the Division provides advanced training courses that are designed to give workers further information in areas they are involved with or many encounter in the field. These advanced training courses, primarily for case managers, are generally taught by community experts. To identify topics for advanced training, Training Institute staff reported that they receive input from the district program managers. The Training Institute reports that in 2005 it offered eight courses, such as a workshop on working with chemically dependent families, at several times and locations. In some cases, multiple sessions of these courses were offered. In 2005, the Training Institute's 21 advanced training sessions totaled approximately 107 hours of instruction. Although attendance is not required, according to Institute staff, more than 700 division staff attended these trainings.

In addition to the advanced training courses, case managers and supervisors have other opportunities to obtain continuing education. For example, CPS staff may obtain continuing education by attending the Division's annual supervisory leadership conference, selected community workshops and conferences, and local CPS office training, and by taking refresher training courses provided by the Training Institute on CHILDS and its safety and risk assessment tools and some courses provided through the Arizona Government University.

Division developing a formal continuing education program

The Division is working on developing a more formal continuing education program for case managers and has begun planning a supervisors' continuing education program. In July 2005, Training Institute staff surveyed case managers, supervisors, and management to identify potential training topics for case managers and supervisors. Based on this survey, Training Institute staff identified topics for case manager continuing education courses and organized them into job specialties, such as investigations, ongoing case management, and adoptions. Further, Training Institute staff report that case managers will be required to attend some of the continuing education courses, while others will be elective, and some of these courses will be developed internally, while others will be obtained through community providers. The Training Institute has developed course descriptions for some of these courses and is arranging for their development. The Training Institute expects some of these courses to be offered in late 2006, but has not set a firm timetable. In addition, the Training Institute has identified topics for its supervisor continuing education courses, but has not developed course descriptions or a timetable.

Division needs to address several areas while developing its formal continuing education program

In designing its formal continuing education program, the Division needs to address the following areas to ensure that the program is established and that CPS case managers and supervisors receive the required training.

- **Establish a timeline for developing the continuing education program—**The Division needs to develop a timeline for completing its case manager and supervisor continuing education program. The Division indicates that development of this program was delayed as the Division was focused on revisions to its case manager core training. The Division began working on a needs assessment and course identification around July 2005. Although there are estimates for completing different tasks, such as developing the internally taught courses by the fall of 2006, there is no overall time frame for completing and implementing the case manager and supervisor continuing education program.
- **Develop written policy regarding continuing education requirements—**The Division should develop a written policy regarding its continuing education requirements and communicate this policy to staff. The National Association for Social Workers' standards for continuing professional education recommend

that agencies implement policies supporting continuing professional education. Although the Department reports in its 2005-2009 strategic plan that it plans to implement the Governor's 2003 action plan, including the recommendation for all CPS staff to receive 24 hours of training each year, the Division has not developed a written policy detailing these requirements.

- **Ensure courses are available to CPS staff state-wide**—The Division should ensure that all case managers and supervisors have adequate access to continuing education courses. Of the eight advanced training courses offered in 2005, five were provided only in Phoenix or Tucson, and only one advanced training course was provided in each of the four rural districts. As a result, case managers and supervisors in the rural areas had to travel to Phoenix or Tucson to attend many of the advanced training courses. Training Institute staff report that the community instructors are often not willing to travel outside of Phoenix or Tucson. To ensure that all staff are able to meet the continuing education requirements the Division establishes, the Division should take steps to ensure that its new continuing education courses are provided throughout the State, including considering interactive distance learning using such technology as interactive audio or video, computer-based instruction, or other electronic technologies.
- **Establish requirements for accepting locally provided training**—Some CPS staff receive training provided by their local offices, so the Division needs to develop a formal process for determining which local office trainings qualify as continuing education. Specifically, the Division should establish requirements on the types of training that will qualify as continuing education as well as a process for reviewing requests to receive continuing education credit for local office trainings. The International Association for Continuing Education and Training recommends that continuing education courses have clear learning objectives that meet a specific training need, be planned and conducted by qualified personnel, and have appropriate content and instructional methods. The Division should establish similar requirements and ensure it grants continuing education credit only for courses that meet these requirements.
- **Maintain adequate training records**—To ensure that CPS staff receive the required continuing education, the Division will need an effective tracking and monitoring mechanism. Training records help ensure that caseworkers have been provided with the skills and knowledge needed to fulfill their responsibilities. The National Association of Social Workers' standards for continuing professional education recommend that organizations establish a system for maintaining and verifying records on each continuing education event. Although the Training Institute uses the Division's automated case management system, CHILDS, to track training attendance, auditors found that staff were up to 6 months behind in recording training attendance. In addition, although the attendance tracking system can produce reports on an individual

employee's training history, it does not produce summary reports that would allow the Training Institute to easily monitor whether CPS staff are meeting the Division's continuing education requirements. The Division reports that it has already begun developing these reports.

- **Monitor program effectiveness**—To ensure that its continuing education program is effective, the Division should establish a process for assessing its program and for making adjustments as appropriate. Training Institute staff report that they plan to administer course-level evaluations that would be reviewed by both the trainer and the training supervisor to identify content and presentation improvements. The Training Institute should ensure that these course evaluations assess the quality of the instructors and courses as well as the extent to which the learning outcomes were achieved. The Division should then establish a process to review these evaluations and to make appropriate adjustments based on the results. Further, as these course-level evaluations may not provide the data needed for an adequate evaluation of learning experiences, the Division should consider the need for a comprehensive program evaluation to assess how well the continuing education training program satisfied employees' needs and expectations.

Recommendations:

1. The Division should establish a timeline for completing its case manager and supervisor continuing education program.
2. The Division should develop a written policy on its continuing education requirements and communicate this policy to its staff.
3. The Division should take steps to ensure that its new continuing education courses are provided throughout the State so that all staff are able to meet the continuing education requirements.
4. The Division should establish requirements on the types of training courses that will qualify as continuing education and establish and implement review procedures to ensure it grants continuing education credit only for courses that meet these requirements.
5. To ensure that caseworkers receive the required amount of training, the Division should:
 - a. Ensure that training attendance records are entered into CHILDS in a timely manner, and
 - b. Develop summary reports that will allow Training Institute staff to monitor compliance with continuing education policy requirements.
6. To ensure that its continuing education program is effective, the Division should establish a process for assessing the program and for making adjustments as appropriate.

AGENCY RESPONSE



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

1717 W. Jefferson - P.O. Box 6123 - Phoenix, AZ 85005

Janet Napolitano
Governor

David A. Berns
Director

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

Dear Ms. Davenport:

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

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

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

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

Please feel free to call me at (602) 542-5678 if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

David A. Berns

Enclosure

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY'S RESPONSE TO THE
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES TRAINING
APRIL 2006**

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

Comments to Introduction and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DES COMMENTS REGARDING FINDING 1: PAGES 7 – 16

Finding 1, Recommendation 1

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

DES Response

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 2

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

DES Response

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 3

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

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

DES Response

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 4

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

DES Response

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 5

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

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

DES Response

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

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 6

The Division should better monitor field training consistency by:

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

DES Response

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

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

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

Finding 1, Recommendation 7:

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

DES Response:

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

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

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

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 1

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

DES Response

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

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 2

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

DES Response

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 3

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

DES Response:

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 4

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

DES Response:

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

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 5

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

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

DES Response:

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

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

Finding 2, Recommendation 6

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

DES Response:

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

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

CPS Performance Audits and Information Briefs Issued

Performance Audits		Information Briefs	
CPS-0501	CHILDS Data Integrity Process	IB-0401	Federal Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project Proposal
CPS-0502	Timeliness and Thoroughness of Investigations	IB-0501	Family Foster Homes and Placements
		IB-0502	Revenue Maximization

Future CPS Information Briefs

Types of Federal Monies Available