

Department of Human Services

Division of Youth Services Reporting

Performance Audit
July 2023
2260P



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KERRI L. HUNTER, CPA, CFE • STATE AUDITOR

July 19, 2023

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

This report contains the results of a performance audit of the Division of Youth Services within the Department of Human Services. The audit was conducted pursuant to Section 2-3-124, C.R.S., which requires the State Auditor to complete an audit before January 1, 2024, examining the “accuracy and quality” of the recidivism and educational outcomes reports of the Division of Youth Services prepared during the preceding 5 years. The report presents our finding, conclusions, and recommendation, and the response of the Department of Human Services.

Kerri L. Hunter



Contents

Report Highlights	1
Chapter 1	
<i>Division of Youth Services Reporting</i>	3
The Division of Youth Services	4
Recidivism Measurement and Reporting	5
Educational Outcomes Measurement and Reporting	7
Audit Purpose, Scope, and Methodology	8
Finding 1—Accuracy of Reporting	11
Recommendation 1	15



Report Highlights

Division of Youth Services Reporting • Department of Human Services
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Key Conclusion

The Division of Youth Services (Division) has improved the accuracy and quality of the *Educational Outcomes Evaluation of the Colorado Division of Youth Services* (Educational Outcomes Report) and *Recidivism Evaluation of the Colorado Division of Youth Services* (Recidivism Report) since the OSA's 2019 audit of the reports. However, the Division could further improve its quality assurance controls to mitigate the risk of mistakes and human error in the Educational Outcomes Report narrative.

Key Findings

- Since the OSA's 2019 audit of the Educational Outcomes and Recidivism Reports, the Division has improved the accuracy and quality of both reports, including implementing the prior audit recommendations aimed at improving its internal controls over the reports.
- The conclusions and figures presented in the 2022 Educational Outcomes and Recidivism Reports were generally supported by the Division's data on youth and the Judicial Department data it used to prepare the reports. Specifically, we found several minor inaccuracies in the Educational Outcomes Report and no inaccuracies in the Recidivism Report.
- We found the following inaccuracies in the 2022 Educational Outcomes Report, which Division staff reported were caused by human error and missed by its quality control procedures.
 - The Division reported that 240 of the 372 youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021 left supervision with a high school diploma or General Educational Diploma (GED) in-hand at the time of discharge; however, 3 of the 240 youth attained this achievement between 94 to 500 days after their discharge during subsequent Division commitments.
 - In two instances, the Division reported a number in both written and numerical format, but the two did not agree.
 - In two sections of the report, data points were referenced in multiple places, but the numbers did not agree.
- Although the problems we identified had a limited impact on the overall accuracy of the Educational Outcomes Report, a strong quality control process is important to ensure that those who use the report—Department of Human Services management, the General Assembly, and the public—have reliable information.

Background

- Section 19-2.5-1501(4), C.R.S., requires the Division of Youth Services to annually report to the General Assembly the recidivism data, recidivism rates, and the educational outcomes for youth who discharge from its supervision.
- The Educational Outcomes Report provides information on the academic achievement and academic growth of youth discharged from Division supervision in the preceding fiscal year, and the Recidivism Report provides information such as the recidivism rate, which is the rate at which youth reoffend, over 1, 2, and 3 years after discharge from Division supervision.
- This is the second of two audits required by Section 2-3-124, C.R.S., to examine the "accuracy and quality" of the Educational Outcomes and Recidivism reports. The first audit was completed by the OSA in January 2019.

Recommendations Made

1

Responses

Agree: **1**
Partially Agree: **0**
Disagree: **0**



Division of Youth Services Reporting

Section 19-2.5-1501(4), C.R.S., was enacted by the General Assembly in 2018 and requires the Division of Youth Services (Division) within the Department of Human Services (Department) to “collect recidivism data and calculate the recidivism rates and the educational outcomes” for youth who discharge from its supervision and “report the recidivism data, recidivism rates and educational outcomes to the General Assembly annually.”

To satisfy this requirement, the Division annually produces two reports, which are transmitted to the General Assembly:

- *Recidivism Evaluation of the Colorado Division of Youth Services* (Recidivism Report), which provides the recidivism rate for youth released from Division supervision over 1, 2, and 3 years after discharge. Additionally, this report includes demographic information, data on types of recidivist offenses committed, and statistical analyses of variables predictive of recidivism; compares Colorado’s recidivism measurement to that of other states; and provides general recommendations on potential ways to reduce recidivism, which are reviewed by Division management. At the time Section 19-2.5-1501(4), C.R.S., was enacted, the Division had been producing a report that met the requirement regarding recidivism rate reporting, that had been published annually since 1993.
- *Educational Outcomes Evaluation of the Colorado Division of Youth Services* (Educational Outcomes Report), which provides information on the academic achievement of youth released from Division supervision in the preceding fiscal year, as measured by high school diploma and General Educational Diploma (GED) attainment, as well as by participation in post-secondary education and career and technical education programs. The report also provides information on the academic growth of youth released from Division supervision in the preceding fiscal year, as measured by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exams, which are standardized assessments administered during commitment. MAP exams are also used by school districts statewide to measure their students’ academic growth. The Division has published this report annually since 2018.

The reports are publicly available on the Division’s website under “Publications and Reports” (<https://cdhs.colorado.gov/about-cdhs/news/cdhs-publications-and-reports>).

The Division of Youth Services

The Division is located within the Department’s Office of Children, Youth and Families. Section 19-2.5-1501, et seq., C.R.S., charges the Division with the supervision, care, and treatment of youth who have been detained and await adjudication for a crime, or have been committed to Division supervision following conviction of a crime. Statute defines youth as “an individual who is less than twenty-one years of age” [Section 19-1-103(145), C.R.S.]. In its Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report, the Division defined its mission as “to protect, restore, and improve public safety utilizing a continuum of care that provides effective supervision, promotes accountability to victims and communities and helps youth lead constructive lives through positive youth development.” To advance this mission, the Division screens youth under its supervision to determine their service needs and provides them with education and job training, behavioral health treatment, substance use treatment, and transitional services.

Youth currently or previously under the Division’s supervision fall into one of four categories:

- **Detained youth**—youth detained in advance of adjudication, which is a court decision on criminal charges, or detained for 45 days or less as a sanction by the court.
- **Committed youth**—youth held after adjudication resulting in a criminal conviction.
- **Paroled youth**—youth conditionally released from a residential commitment while under Division supervision.
- **Discharged youth**—youth released from Division supervision after a commitment sentence, either upon completion of parole or transfer to an adult correctional facility.

The Recidivism and Educational Outcomes Reports focus on youth who have been committed to and discharged from Division supervision. All committed youth are subject to 6 months of mandatory parole after they have been released from a residential commitment with the Division; therefore, the reports include information on paroled youth. However, the reports do not include any information on youth within the category of “Detained Youth” who have been detained by the Division but have not undergone adjudication.

Exhibit 1.1 provides information on the size of the distinct populations under the supervision of the Division for the 3 most recent years for which data is available.

Exhibit 1.1
Division of Youth Services Population Statistics
Fiscal Years 2020-2022

	Fiscal Year 2020		Fiscal Year 2021		Fiscal Year 2022	
	Unique Youth ¹	Average Daily Population	Unique Youth ¹	Average Daily Population	Unique Youth ¹	Average Daily Population
Detained Youth	2,496	223.5	1,553	146.7	1,751	158.5
Committed Youth	1,033	455.3	832	342.7	622	284.4
Paroled Youth	598	206.9	473	163.8	326	110.3
Total Youth Supervised²	3,634	885.8	2,549	653.2	2,557	553.2
Total Discharged Youth	398	n/a	372	n/a	242	n/a

Source: Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services Annual Statistical Reports from 2020 through 2022.

¹ Unique youth is the number of individuals in the noted population group (i.e., detained, committed, paroled, discharged). A youth detained multiple times in a year is only counted once.

² Total youth supervised does not sum the unique youth in the detention, commitment, and parole population groups because some individuals move and are counted in multiple categories during a given year.

The Division operates 15 secure facilities for detained and committed youth throughout Colorado. Additionally, the Division contracts with private organizations to provide services such as secure residential treatment programs, group homes, and foster homes, that may serve as initial treatment programs upon committal to the Division or transition placements for paroled youth. In Fiscal Year 2022, committed youth spent an average of 14.3 months in secure facilities operated by the Division and 1 month with privately contracted programs.

Recidivism Measurement and Reporting

In its Recidivism Report, the Division defines recidivism as a new adjudication or conviction resulting from a misdemeanor or felony offense committed after youth are discharged from Division supervision during the 1, 2, and 3 years following each individual’s discharge. Recidivism is a frequently-used metric that can provide information on the efficacy of the juvenile justice system at preventing future criminal acts, as well as information about other social, personal, and societal factors that may impact the likelihood of continued criminal conduct.

In order to measure the recidivism rates of the youth released from its supervision, the Division annually receives judicial filings data from the Colorado Judicial Department which it matches to its data on youth discharged from Division supervision. Youth discharged from the Division who have a judicial record indicating that they were found guilty of a criminal offense within the applicable

time period are counted as recidivists for the purposes of the Division's analysis. The Division reports the type of recidivist offenses that occurred, including whether an offense was a misdemeanor or felony and whether the offense was one defined by Section 24-4.1-302, C.R.S. (the Victim Rights Act). Victim Rights Act offenses generally include offenses that harm another person physically, deprive another person of their property, or that are intended to impede the adjudication of a crime (e.g., murder, assault, robbery, burglary, witness tampering).

Additionally, the Division performs a series of statistical analyses examining whether various demographic characteristics are significantly different between recidivists and non-recidivists, and identifies variables statistically most predictive of recidivism. For example, the 2022 Recidivism Report notes that a youth's parole rating at discharge and the number of escapes made during Division supervision are two variables that were predictive of recidivism. The Division's Recidivism Reports also include a discussion of its recidivism rates and methodology in comparison to that of other states, and recommendations to Division management for improving the recidivism rate.

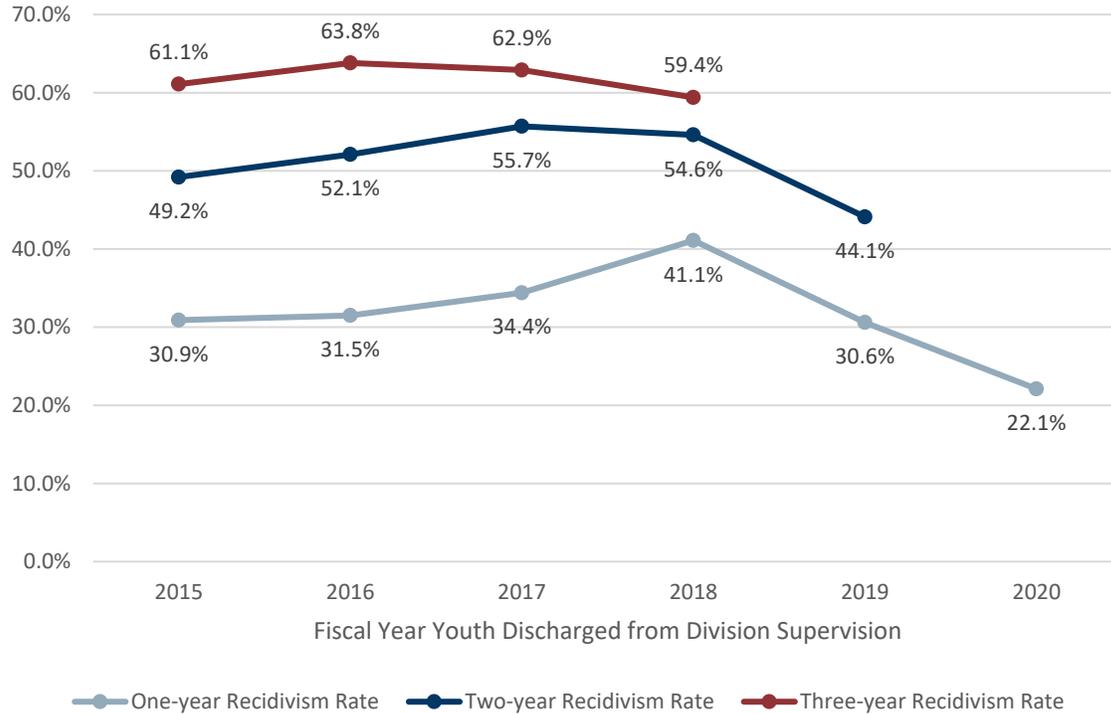
Because of limitations inherent in the availability and quality of judicial offense data, the Division's report indicates that the estimated recidivism rates it provides are likely underestimates. Division staff responsible for preparing the reports told us they are unable to identify the following types of recidivist offenses, so they would not be included in the Division's calculated recidivism rates:

- **Recidivist offenses outside of Colorado.** The Division does not have access to the judicial filings of other states or countries.
- **Recidivist offenses where the judicial filing was unable to be matched to the name and identifying information known to the Division.** This can occur due to false or inconsistent names and other identifying information within the judicial records.
- **Recidivist offenses that are adjudicated after the Division has received that year's transmittal of filings from the Judicial Department.** A recidivist offense is only counted if a finding of guilt has already occurred and has been recorded in the judicial filings data when the Judicial Department transmits them to the Division. However, these offenses would be included in subsequent years' analysis provided that they are adjudicated within the 3 years that discharged youth are included in the Division's evaluations.
- **Recidivist offenses committed by an individual where that individual was never apprehended or identified.**

The recidivism rates reported in the Division's Recidivism Reports released from 2019 through 2022 are shown in Exhibit 1.2. For the purposes of this measure, the Division groups youth by the fiscal year they discharged from supervision and then calculates the rate at which youth in each group recidivate at 1, 2, and 3 years following their discharge.

Exhibit 1.2

Recidivism Rates for Youth Released in Fiscal Years 2015-2020



Source: Division of Youth Services' annual *Recidivism Evaluation of the Colorado Division of Youth Services* reports from July 2019 through July 2022.

Educational Outcomes Measurement and Reporting

The Division provides committed youth with educational programming—including both general education and special education services—that focus on youth achieving a high school diploma or GED (i.e., the successful completion high school equivalency tests), accessing career and technical education and training courses, and enrolling in post-secondary education courses. Statute provides the Division with broad authority over the measures it uses to assess the impact of its educational programming and the content of the Educational Outcomes Report, requiring the Division to calculate and report on “educational outcomes,” but not providing specific measures [Section 19-2.5-1501(4), C.R.S.]. The Division has opted to report on educational outcomes through academic achievement and academic growth measures of youth discharged from Division supervision during the previous fiscal year, and to provide information about the discharged youth such as demographics, treatment needs (i.e., mental health, substance abuse), and special education needs.

Academic Achievement. The Division measures academic achievement by calculating the percentage of youth who discharged from supervision in the preceding fiscal year with a high school diploma or GED in-hand. According to the July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report, 240 of the 372 (65 percent) youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021 had earned their high school diploma or

GED. The report also explains why the remaining 132 (35 percent) youth did not attain their high school diploma or GED, such as they were too young for the attainment, were of age and actively working towards the attainment, were discharged directly to the adult corrections system, or decided not to pursue educational opportunities.

The academic achievement section of the report also provides information on youth participation in career and technical education opportunities and enrollment in college courses while under the Division's supervision. For example, of the 372 youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021, 124 (33 percent) participated in career and technical education classes, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's CareerSafe program, a national youth safety initiative; and 15 (4 percent) youth were enrolled in college courses while under the Division's supervision.

Academic Growth. The Division measures academic growth among committed youth in the subjects of mathematics and reading, using data from MAP exams administered to youth throughout their commitments to the Division, including any prior commitments. The Division began administering MAP exams in 2013 and consulted with education-focused organizations such as the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), the nonprofit organization that created the MAP exams, and the Colorado Department of Education, to develop a methodology for analyzing and reporting the MAP exam data in a way that adequately captures the academic growth of the Division's population of students.

The Division's methodology is complex and requires Division staff to conduct analyses to extract MAP exam data for youth discharged in the prior fiscal year and ensure there are valid exams across subjects and academic terms (i.e., fall, winter, spring) to calculate growth. The MAP exam results and growth measurements are then compared to typical growth scores for youth in alternative education campuses, which are nontraditional schools designed to serve high-risk students, such as those with a history of criminal offenses, drug use, and suspensions/expulsions. According to the July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report, which reports on youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021, 54.1 percent of exams included in the analysis met or exceeded the typical growth for youth in nontraditional settings, such as alternative education campuses.

Audit Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

We conducted this performance audit pursuant to Section 2-3-124, C.R.S., which requires the State Auditor to complete two audits, one before January 1, 2019 and the other before January 1, 2024, examining the "accuracy and quality" of the Division's Recidivism and Educational Outcomes Reports prepared during the preceding 5 years. This is the second audit conducted in accordance with this requirement; the first audit was completed in January 2019. Audit work for this audit was performed from November 2022 through June 2023, and we appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by the Department's management and staff.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The key objectives of the audit were to determine whether the Division communicated accurate and quality information in its annual (1) Recidivism Reports and (2) Educational Outcomes Reports. The scope of the audit was limited to the Recidivism and Educational Outcomes reports, and did not include review of the Division's contractors, operations, or detention and supervision services.

To accomplish our audit objectives, we performed the following audit work:

- Reviewed relevant statutes, criminological literature, academic growth measurement literature, and Division policies and procedures related to the reports.
- Reviewed the Division's Recidivism Reports and Educational Outcomes Reports released between 2019 and 2022, and interviewed Division staff to understand the methodologies used to conduct the data analyses included in the reports and the processes to compile the reports. Because the Division's 2018 Recidivism Report and Educational Outcomes Report were reviewed during the OSA's 2019 performance audit of the Division, we did not include them in this audit. Additionally, 2022 was the most recent year of Division reports available at the time our audit work was conducted; therefore, we reviewed reports for the preceding 4 years for this audit.
- Interviewed Department and Division management and other stakeholders with an interest in juvenile justice, including nonpartisan legislative staff, other state agencies, and commissions, to understand how the reports are used.
- Analyzed the data the Division used to compile the Recidivism and Educational Outcomes Reports released in July 2022 to verify the completeness of the data and the accuracy of the statistics in the reports, and to validate the Division's methodologies for the analyses.
- Evaluated the Division's implementation of recommendations from the OSA's 2019 performance audit.

We relied on the following nonstatistical samples to support our audit work:

- Three random samples, each sampling 10 of the youth in the 1, 2, and 3-year recidivism cohorts the Division studied in its July 2022 Recidivism Report (the cohorts contained 398, 395, 377 youth, respectively), to evaluate the Division's procedure for matching judicial filings to youth in

the study cohort and determine whether the youth were accurately classified as recidivists or non-recidivists.

- A random sample of 20 of the 372 youth from the discharge cohort the Division studied in its July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report to evaluate the reliability of the data and accuracy of the Division's procedures for measuring academic growth.

These samples were chosen to provide sufficient coverage of those areas that were significant to the objectives of this audit; the results of our sample testing were not intended to be projected to the entire population.

As required by auditing standards, we planned our audit work to assess the effectiveness of those internal controls that were significant to our audit objectives. Details about the audit work supporting our findings and conclusions, including any deficiencies in internal control that were significant to our audit objectives, are described in the remainder of this report.

A draft of this report was reviewed by the Department. Obtaining the views of responsible officials is an important part of the OSA's commitment to ensuring that the report is accurate, complete, and objective. The OSA was solely responsible for determining whether and how to revise the report, if appropriate, based on the Department's comments. The written response to the recommendation and the related implementation date was the sole responsibility of the Department.

Finding 1—Accuracy of Reporting

The Division’s Educational Outcomes and Recidivism Reports are prepared by a team of data analysts in its Data Management and Analysis unit, who follow similar processes each year to prepare the reports. Division staff begin the process by obtaining the educational outcomes and recidivism data from multiple sources and data systems, such as:

- Information about the youth and their commitments from Trails, the Division’s case management database
- Criminal adjudication records from the Judicial Department
- Student data, including high school diploma and GED achievement data from Infinite Campus, the Division’s student information system
- The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing data

Division staff clean and validate the data sets before conducting analyses, and primarily use SPSS Statistics (SPSS) software to analyze the data and conduct calculations. The analyses are complex and require Division staff to work with large data sets and to combine records from the multiple data sources and systems discussed above. Sometimes Division staff come across incomplete data that requires further work to make the data set complete. For example, sometimes a youth’s record in Trails indicates they attained their high school diploma or GED, but the attainment date is not provided. Division staff will then research various databases that may have this information or reach out to the youth’s case manager to confirm when the diploma or GED was awarded.

Once the data analyses are complete, Division staff compile the results of the analyses into the report templates, and prepare the reports for review by Division staff, and Division and Department management. The Department then distributes the reports to the General Assembly and makes them available to the public on its website. Additionally, Division management indicated that it uses the information in both reports to assess the performance of the Division’s programs and inform its decision-making.

During the OSA’s 2019 audit of the Division’s Educational Outcomes and Recidivism Reports, we made seven recommendations to the Division related to improving the accuracy, completeness, and quality of its reports. The Division reported in September 2019 that it had implemented all seven recommendations and our audit work during the current audit confirmed this.

What audit work was performed and what was the purpose?

We reviewed statutes, the Division’s Educational Outcomes Reports and Recidivism Reports released between 2019 and 2022, and the Division’s procedures and methodologies used to compile the reports. We also reviewed the aggregate data the Division used to compile its Educational Outcomes and Recidivism Reports released in July 2022 and two random samples of youth from the discharge cohorts included in each report to verify the accuracy of the statistics in the report. The random samples consisted of 20 youth from the cohort of 372 youth included in the July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report and 30 youth from the cohort of 1,170 youth included in the July 2022 Recidivism Report. Our sample testing included determining whether the data for each sampled youth recorded in the aggregated data sets the Division creates for its analyses align with the data for the youth in the multiple data sources the Division uses. We also interviewed Division management and staff to understand their processes for compiling and reviewing the reports.

The purpose of our audit work was to determine whether the Division has processes in place to ensure it communicates accurate and complete information in its Educational Outcomes Reports and Recidivism Reports.

How were the results of the audit work measured?

Information provided in reports should be accurate. In 2016, the Office of the State Controller directed all state agencies to begin following the *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (Green Book). According to Principle 13 of the Green Book, 13.05, “Management processes the obtained data into quality information that supports the internal control system...Quality information is...current, complete, accurate, accessible, and provided on a timely basis. Management considers these characteristics...and makes revisions when necessary so that the information is quality information.” Additionally, the Information Coordination Act [Section 24-1-136(1)(a), C.R.S.] states that, “The operational reports of the executive agencies should provide complete, concise, and useful information about executive operations to the governor and the general assembly...”

Audit recommendations should be implemented in a timely manner. Principle 17 of the Green Book, 17.06, states that management should “remediate internal control deficiencies on a timely basis. These corrective actions include resolution of audit findings.”

What did the audit work find, what problems did it identify, and why did the problems occur?

Overall, we found the Division has improved the accuracy and quality of the Educational Outcomes Report and Recidivism Report since the OSA’s prior audit in 2019. Specifically, we found that the

Division has implemented all of the recommendations from our 2019 audit and improved its internal controls over the reports by:

- Implementing uniform methodologies for the Educational Outcomes Report
- Establishing a mechanism for measuring educational advancement for youth who enter Division supervision at or above grade 12
- Establishing a quality control process designed to ensure the accuracy of the reports
- Obtaining adult misdemeanor convictions from the Denver County Court for the Recidivism Report
- Implementing a methodology for identifying and reporting recidivist offenses that fall under the Victim Rights Act
- Establishing a process for reviewing and reporting data on youth identified as a recidivist during the first year of discharge to determine if they have any subsequent convictions during the second and third year after discharge.

Based on our review, the conclusions and figures presented in both reports in 2022 were generally supported by the Division's data on youth and the Judicial Department data it used to prepare the reports. However, we identified two areas in the Educational Outcomes Report where the Division could make further improvements to its quality assurance controls over the report. The problems we identified are described below.

Inclusion of Post-Discharge Achievements. According to the Division's methodology for preparing figures on the number of youth who discharge from the Division with a high school diploma or GED in-hand, youth should not be included if they received the achievement after being discharged from Division supervision. However, we found that the Division's academic achievement analysis in the July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report included data collected after the youth discharged from Division supervision. Specifically:

- Of the 372 youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021, the Division reported that 240 left supervision with a high school diploma or GED in hand at the time of discharge. However, 3 of the 240 youth did not attain this achievement for another 94 to 500 days after their discharge. These youth earned their achievement during a subsequent committal to the Division, but should not have been included in the Division's statistics for youth discharged in Fiscal Year 2021.

Numerical Errors. We identified 4 instances in which the Division published inaccurate numbers in the July 2022 Educational Outcomes Report. Specifically, we found:

- 2 instances in which a number was provided in both written and numerical format, but the two did not agree. For example, page 8 of the Educational Outcomes Report states “seventy-eight percent (94%) of newly committed youth” were placed into a state-operated youth center. A similar error is found on page 21, in a discussion about disabilities related to individualized education programs (IEPs) when noting that “nineteen (21) youth or 20.8% had an other health impairment...”
- 2 sections of the report in which data points were referenced in multiple places, but the numbers did not agree. In one section, the report noted that “five (5) youth or 4.9% had another type of disability,” but when this same data point was referenced in other places in the report, the number stated was “3.0%” of special education youth and a total of 3 youth that had another type of disability (i.e., intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and speech or language impairment). We used the Division’s data to recalculate the number and found the correct number to be 3 youth. In the other section, the report noted that “approximately one-fifth of exams (22.8%) represented growth in the highest quintile,” but this same data point was referenced as 22.2 percent in a graph on the same page. Our recalculation of the Division’s data found the correct number to be 22.2 percent. In the same section, the report notes a trend of “53.6% of youth demonstrating growth in the highest and second quintile [sic],” but in the graphic on the same page, as well as our recalculation of the Division’s data, indicate the sentence should have read “the highest and *fourth* quintiles.”

Division staff told us that the mistakes we identified were human error and missed by the quality control checks and reviews that are outlined in its quality assurance and control procedures for the reports. The procedures include Division staff checking their analyses in SPSS; verification of the results, figures, and statistics in the report against the SPSS analyses by Division staff not involved in the analyses; and review of the report by Division and Department management and staff, as well as the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budget, before the report is submitted to the General Assembly. However, the procedures do not require Division staff to document completion of the quality assurance checks, such as which figures were verified against analyses, or that reviews were completed. Documenting what quality assurance checks occurred could help the Division ensure the types of errors we found are corrected.

Why do these problems matter?

Although the problems we identified had a limited impact on the overall accuracy of the Educational Outcomes Report, when the Division does not have a strong quality control process in place to ensure the accuracy of its reports, and regularly review the process for improvement, there is risk that it will report inaccurate or conflicting statistics and that Division management, the General Assembly, and public will not have reliable information on educational outcomes and recidivism among youth committed to the Division. Additionally, some stakeholders, such as Legislative Council staff, told us they use information from the reports in their work products, such as reports

to the General Assembly, so it is important that the Division has processes in place to ensure the accuracy of its reports.

Recommendation 1

The Division of Youth Services should review its quality control procedures and quality assurance processes over the Educational Outcomes Report to look for opportunities to further mitigate the risk of mistakes and human error in the report narrative. This could include implementing additional reviews of information published in the report and/or establishing a process to improve its documentation that reviews have been completed.

Response

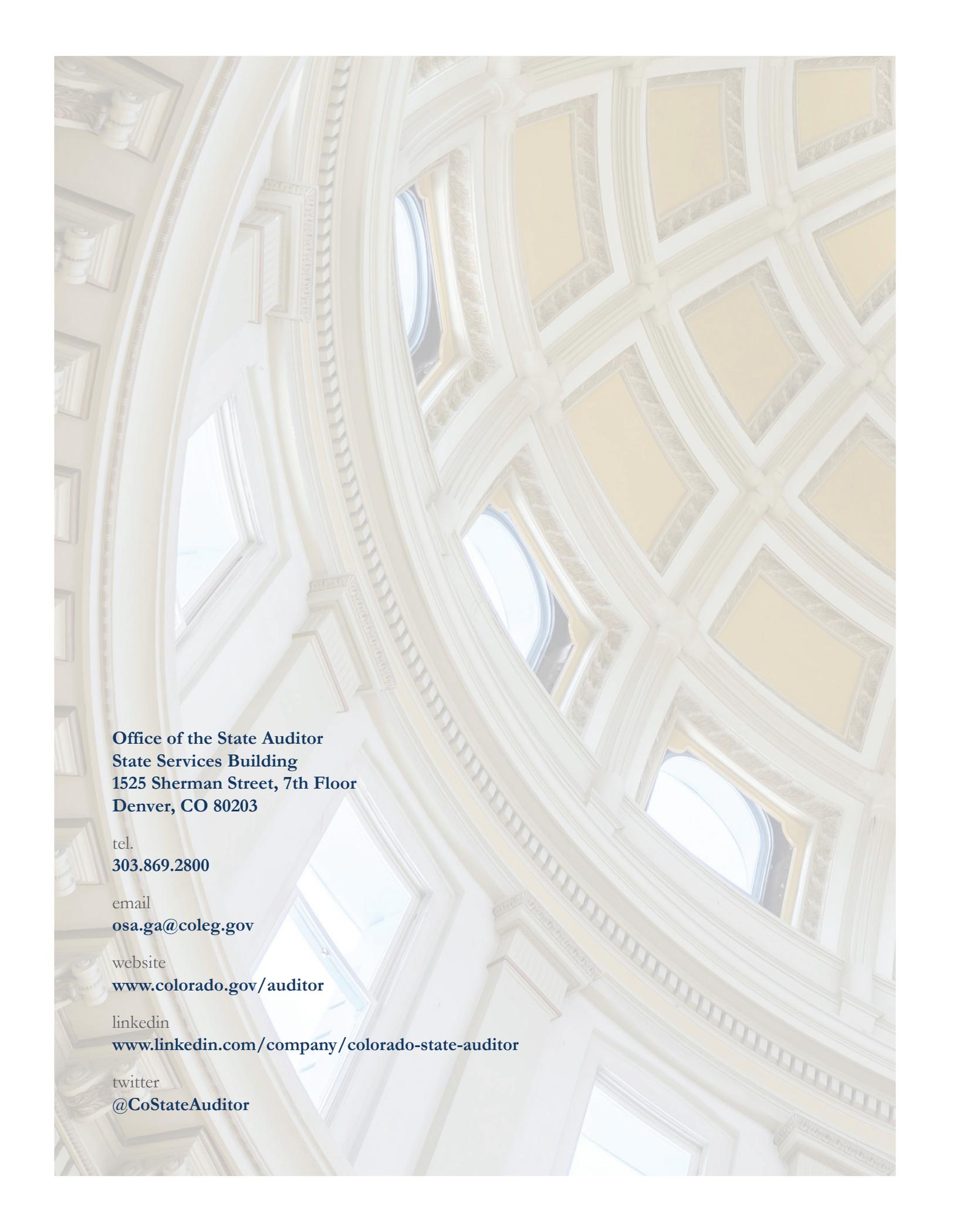
Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services

Agree

Implementation Date: July 2023

In addition to the current Division and Office level reviews, the DYS Educational Outcomes Report will undergo an additional layer of review, which will be conducted by the Colorado Department of Human Services Audit Division to further mitigate the risk of mistakes and human error in the report narrative finalization. Additionally, the Department will document each level of review to ensure a consistent review process is followed.





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