Arizona Foster Care Tuition Waiver Pilot Programs
Auditor General Report No. 17-106
Initial Follow-Up Report

Recommendation	Status/Additional Explanation

Finding 1: **Programs have assisted recipients, but data management needs improvement, and changes to some requirements may increase Programs' reach**

1.1 The community college districts, and ABOR in collaboration with the universities, should each establish processes for collecting and/or reporting data on the Programs using one of the following options:	**Implemented** **Yavapai College has developed a standard policy and procedure for collecting and reporting data. All staff are trained on policies and procedures. These were revised as of May, 2017.** **Attached:**
• If each community college district, and if ABOR in collaboration with the universities, continue using an outside service provider to collect the Programs' data, they should develop and implement policies and procedures for providing accurate and consistent data to the outside service provider and ensure that all appropriate staff are trained on these policies and procedures; or	Rec. 1.1 D1 – Policies and Procedures Overview
• If each community college district, and if ABOR in collaboration with the universities, do not continue using an outside service provider to collect the Programs' data, they should develop and implement policies and procedures for collecting key program data that the Provider currently collects, such as who applied for a waiver, who received a waiver, and the reasons waivers were denied, and ensure that all appropriate staff are trained on these policies and procedures.	
1.2 If the Legislature continues the Programs and determines that further assessment of their effectiveness should be performed, it should consider, in consultation with relevant stakeholders—including the community college districts and ABOR—what program outcome data, such as graduation and dropout rates, should be tracked and reported.	**Not applicable**
1.3 If the Legislature determines to continue the Programs, it should consider studying, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the impacts and increased costs of modifying some requirements or adding additional supports to expand the reach of the Programs, such as:	**Not applicable**

- Requiring the community college districts and ABOR, as well as other state agencies such as the Arizona Department of Child Safety, to coordinate outreach efforts to ensure all eligible current and former foster youth are aware of the Programs and receive correct information about them;

- Increasing the age cap on eligibility to better reflect the educational trajectory of former foster youth;

- Modifying the eligible educational expenses or the order in which financial assistance is applied to increase the amount of financial aid available to current and former foster youth for other educational expenses; and

- Encouraging on-campus support programs to help meet current and former foster youths' non-financial needs.

Finding 2: ABOR and community college districts should improve Programs' implementation

	Recommendation	Status/Additional Explanation
2.1	The community college districts, and ABOR in collaboration with the universities, should each review their policies and procedures for processing waiver applications to ensure that they provide adequate and appropriate guidance for verifying that applicants meet all eligibility requirements before awarding a waiver. As part of this review, they should ensure that the policies and procedures align with the eligibility requirements governing foster care tuition waivers and that appropriate community college district and university staff who process waiver applications have been trained on the policies and procedures.	**Implemented** **Yavapai College has developed a step by step tuition waiver eligibility procedure for verifying applicant eligibility requirements. All appropriate staff who process waiver applications are trained on this policy and procedure. These procedures were revised as of May, 2017.** Attached: Rec 2.1 D1 – Foster Care to Success AZ Tuition Waiver Eligibility Procedures
2.2	If the community college districts, and if ABOR in collaboration with the universities, identify any deficiencies in their policies and procedures or training as part of their review, they should modify their policies and procedures and/or train all relevant staff as appropriate.	**Implemented** **Yavapai College conducts ongoing review of all policies and procedures to meet federal regulations and makes appropriate changes as required.**
2.3	The community college districts, and ABOR in collaboration with the universities, should each determine whether they will continue using an outside service provider to assist in the Programs' operation, and then implement one of the following options:	**In Progress** YC will continue to provide services to foster care applicants through the current arrangement between the Children's Action Alliance (CAA) and Foster Care To Success. ARS 15-1809.01 does not prescribe that a contract must be entered into between YC and FosterCare2Success.

- If the community college districts, and if ABOR in collaboration with the universities, continue using an outside service provider, they should each enter into a contract with an outside service provider that clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and requirements for each party, including how the outside service provider will be monitored, how the Programs' data will be managed, and when the Programs' application will be made available to applicants; or

- If the community college districts, and if ABOR in collaboration with the universities, do not continue using an outside service provider, they should each develop processes for:

  o Ensuring that applicants have a method for applying for the Programs, including how to evaluate recipients if the Programs are not continued;

  o Ensuring that applicants meet the foster care eligibility requirement;

  o Ensuring that the Programs' application(s) are opened and/or reviewed each semester on a date that ensures applicants have adequate opportunity to make critical decisions about their college attendance and seek additional financial aid; and

  o Ensuring that statutorily required volunteer hours are completed.

2.4 The community college districts, and ABOR in collaboration with the universities, should each develop and implement procedures for ensuring that applicants receive, understand, and have sufficient time to complete any required forms or documentation that the universities or community college districts may require as part of the application process, such as supplemental forms that require applicants to self-certify that they have met the waiver eligibility requirements.	**Not applicable**