

Office of the Auditor General
Preliminary Survey Summary

**Select Training and Staff Development
Activities for Child Welfare and
Public Assistance Staff**

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

December 2025

The auditor general shall conduct post audits of financial transactions and accounts of the state and of all branches, departments, offices, boards, commissions, agencies, authorities and institutions of the state established by this constitution or by law, and performance post audits thereof.

The auditor general may make investigations pertinent to the conduct of audits.



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Office of the Auditor General

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Doug A. Ringler, CPA, CIA
Auditor General

December 15, 2025

Elizabeth Hertel, Director
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
South Grand Building
Lansing, Michigan

Director Hertel:

This is our preliminary survey summary of Select Training and Staff Development Activities for Child Welfare and Public Assistance Staff, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Because we did not identify significant concerns to warrant the additional use of our audit resources, we decided to terminate this performance audit.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during our preliminary survey. If you have any questions, please call me or Laura J. Hirst, CPA, Deputy Auditor General.

Sincerely,

Doug Ringler
Auditor General

PRELIMINARY SURVEY SUMMARY

SELECT TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR CHILD WELFARE AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STAFF

RESULTS

Our preliminary survey did not identify significant concerns to warrant the additional use of our audit resources to complete a performance audit. Therefore, we terminated this project and did not conduct sufficient testing to conclude on the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Select Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS's) Training and Staff Development Activities for Child Welfare and Public Assistance Staff.

FACTORS IMPACTING AUDIT TERMINATION

- For child welfare staff and supervisors, we:
 - Reviewed 14 new staff and determined all had a qualifying degree relevant to their job position and completed Pre-Service Institute (PSI) training relevant to their job position within 112 days of hire.
 - Reviewed 18 newly promoted supervisors and determined all met specified experience requirements at the time of their promotion and completed New Supervisor Institute (NSI) training within 112 days of promotion.
 - Reviewed 21 staff and supervisors required to meet annual in-service training requirements and determined all met or exceeded the minimum training hours requirement.
- For public assistance staff and supervisors, we:
 - Reviewed 19 new staff and determined all were enrolled in New Eligibility Specialist (NES) training within 30 days of hire and completed the training within 10 weeks.
 - Reviewed 24 newly promoted supervisors and determined 22 (92%) completed NSI training.
- The Office of Workforce Development and Training (OWDT) had an extensive training library including computer-based and instructor-led training.
- OWDT and the Leadership Development Division (LDD) had processes to evaluate the Learning Management System training library offerings, improve current training, and implement new training, including reviewing staff post-training evaluations and collaborating with other MDHHS areas to

address emerging issues in child welfare and public assistance.

BACKGROUND

Description: MDHHS provides training and staff development to its child welfare and public assistance staff through OWDT, within the Office of Policy and Program Support, and LDD, within the Office of Culture, Community, Education, and Leadership. OWDT and LDD are responsible for administering the initial and ongoing training of approximately 12,500 child welfare and public assistance staff and supervisors. Approximately 9,800 are MDHHS staff and 2,700 are private agency staff. OWDT and LDD are also responsible for enhancing current training and/or developing new training topics in response to the training needs of these staff.

OWDT and LDD use the Learning Management System to post available initial and ongoing trainings and to record and track training enrollment and completion information. Child welfare and public assistance staff and supervisors are added to the Learning Management System through daily interfaces with the Michigan Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System and Bridges Integrated Automated Eligibility Determination System that identify new employees and supervisors for training enrollment.

Initial training sessions are designed to help new caseworkers and eligibility specialists learn and put into practice the basic skills necessary to meet the complex needs of children and families served by Michigan's child welfare and public assistance systems. These include:

- PSI which is a nine-week session including a combination of classroom, online, and on-the-job training for new child welfare staff.
- NES which is a 10-week session including virtual instructor-led training and on-the-job training for new public assistance staff.

New supervisors are enrolled in NSI, which includes two weeks of leadership topics for all supervisors. In addition, new child welfare supervisors receive two weeks and new public assistance supervisors receive one week of program-specific topics.

PSI and NSI are required to be completed within 112 days of hire or promotion for caseload-carrying staff. No time frame requirement exists for public assistance caseworkers to complete NES; however, they are typically enrolled within 30 days of hire and training is completed in the subsequent 10-week period.

OWDT and LDD also provide and track ongoing annual training requirements for child welfare caseload-carrying staff and supervisors and ongoing training requested for public assistance staff. Ongoing training can be computer-based or instructor-led

and offered in the Learning Management System or provided externally with a record of the training maintained within the Learning Management System upon completion.

OWDT and LDD improve current training and develop new curriculum by tracking participation and analyzing how information learned is used on the job through reviewing post-training surveys, collaborating with other MDHHS program areas to ensure training content aligns with current policies and workforce needs, and/or researching best practices to identify potential improvements.

Employees: As of July 25, 2025, OWDT had 59 full-time employees and LDD had 9 full-time employees.

SCOPE

Our preliminary survey generally covered October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025 and included a limited review of select OWDT and LDD activities related to training and staff development for child welfare and public assistance staff, as follows:

- Recording new staff and supervisors in the Learning Management System for tracking applicable training activities.
- Monitoring staff completion of PSI, NSI, NES, and annual in-service training within required time frames, as applicable.
- Providing job-related training topics for child welfare and public assistance staff and supervisors.
- Evaluating training participants' feedback to make any needed training improvements.
- Researching best practices for child welfare and public assistance training.
- Tracking requests for new and/or improved training topics.

PURPOSE

Within a performance audit, we design the preliminary survey to obtain an understanding of the core activities within an entity or a program and to identify potential program improvements and/or deficiencies that could impair management's ability to conduct its operations in an effective and efficient manner. If the results of a preliminary survey do not identify significant concerns, our practice is to terminate the planned performance audit.

Preliminary survey procedures are limited in nature and should not be considered a completed performance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In addition, our preliminary survey procedures would not necessarily disclose the presence or

absence of any material conditions and/or reportable conditions. Given the procedures we employed did not constitute a performance audit, we will not issue a performance audit report and we do not express conclusions regarding the effectiveness or efficiency of Select Training and Staff Development Activities for Child Welfare and Public Assistance Staff.



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