

Audit finds conflicts in programs for juveniles

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A state audit of juvenile delinquency prevention programs funded by the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found that some of the recipients have conflicts of interest because they serve on county councils that award the money.

State Auditor Les Merritt said in a news release that the audit did not find examples of abuse in the program. He said the department and county councils need to do a better job of monitoring the community programs they fund.

Some data on the programs that auditors examined were found inaccurate.

The department provides more than \$20 million to county Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils, which then award it to community programs intended to reduce and prevent juvenile crime. This year, state lawmakers studied the councils to determine whether they were working properly before awarding them money in this year's budget.

The audit found that council members in 14 counties -- none in the Triangle -- are also managers and directors of the programs they are funding. "Although our audit did not find abuse, these conflicting duties create the potential for abuse," the audit said.

In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the councils funded 499 programs that served more than 34,000 youths.

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