COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2766
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND SENIOR SERVICES: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT YOUTH PROGRAMS: ITEM 42 ON JUNE 15, 2004 AGENDA**

At the request of the First District, we reviewed the Request for Proposals (RFP) process related to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Programs initiated by the Department of Community and Senior Services (DCSS or Department). Specifically, we reviewed the RFP to determine if the evaluation criteria were clear; reviewed the evaluation instrument to determine if it was consistent with the RFP; and reviewed the scoring of the proposals to determine if they were fair, reasonable and consistent.

We also reviewed the written proposals and evaluation instruments for Pomona Valley Youth Employment Services, Inc. (PVYES) and Soledad Enrichment Action, Inc. (SEA) to ensure that the proposals were appropriately ranked.

Review Summary

We found that the RFP process was conducted fairly and the proposals were evaluated using meaningful criteria. DCSS disclosed in the narrative of the RFP the criteria for the evaluation of the written proposals. Each written proposal was scored by a group of DCSS staff who met to discuss significant variances in scoring, agreed on a consensus score for each question in the evaluation instrument, and documented their justification for their scores. Our independent evaluation of the Pomona and SEA proposals confirmed DCSS' rankings.

The details of our review are discussed below.

Background

In December 2003, DCSS issued a RFP seeking qualified organizations to provide services to assist eligible In-School and/or Out-of-School youth to successfully transition to adulthood, employment and further education and training. A bidders' conference was held in December 2003 and related questions and answers were distributed to concerned parties shortly thereafter.

DCSS received a total of 43 proposals of which 23 were recommended for funding based on receipt of a score of 750 points or greater. Two of the 20 applicants not recommended for funding were PVYES and SEA. Both of these applicants are providers under the current contracts, due to expire June 30, 2004. Both appealed their scores. The Appeals Committee consisted of three Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members.

Evaluation Process and Evaluation Criteria

The RFP identified minimum qualifications that the written proposals must meet before the proposals would be evaluated. The Department also disclosed the criteria for the written evaluation in the narrative of the RFP. The evaluation instrument was based on a 1,000 point scale and included areas for reviewers to comment on their scores, and delineated specific criteria (with assigned points) that evaluators were to use in rating each major evaluation category. To assist proposers in ensuring that proposals contained all required information, the Department also included a comprehensive checklist as an attachment to the RFP.

DCSS created four groups, consisting of two to three program staff that were knowledgeable of the technical requirements and were well qualified to participate in the proposal evaluations. Each group was assigned seven to 15 proposals to evaluate. Each group member independently reviewed the proposals and then met as a group to discuss significant variances in scoring, determine a consensus score for each question on the evaluation instrument, and document their justification for the scores.

The evaluation criteria were clear and that the evaluation instrument was consistent with the RFP. In addition, the process used to rank the written proposals was fair, reasonable and consistent.

Proposal Scoring

We reviewed the mathematical accuracy of the scores assigned to the top two ranked proposals for both the In-School and Out-of-School programs as well as the PVYES and SEA proposals. We noted no mathematical errors.

The Appeals Committee addressed all of the issues contained in PVYES' and SEA's appeal, and recommended that DCSS assign additional points, 11 and 31 points respectively, to these agencies' scores. However, the adjusted scores of 581 and 692

for the In-School Program, and 611 and 695 for the Out-of-School Program, still fell below the required 750 points necessary to receive funding.

We reviewed the written proposals and appeals of both PVYES and SEA, and the final assigned scores. In general, based on content of the written proposals, we concur with the evaluation team's assignment of scores.

Review of Report

We discussed the results of our review with Department management who agrees with our findings. If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:JK

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Raymond Fortner, Interim County Counsel
Department of Community and Senior Services
Cynthia Banks, Chief Deputy Director
Josie Marquez, Assistant Director
Virginia Enriquez, Manager, Workforce Investment Programs
Violet Varona-Lukens, Board of Supervisors Executive Office
Public Information Office
Audit Committee