COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

April 12, 2006

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **OLIVE CREST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Olive Crest Foster Family Agency (Olive Crest or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Olive Crest, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Olive Crest is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 54 certified foster homes in which 31 DCFS children were placed. Olive Crest's headquarters is in Orange County and the Agency has Los Angeles County offices in Bellflower and Burbank. Olive Crest's Los Angeles County offices are located in the Fourth and Fifth districts.

DCFS pays Olive Crest a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Olive Crest receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of these amounts, the Agency pays the foster parents between $624 and

$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid Olive Crest approximately $1,110,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Olive Crest was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated the Agency's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Olive Crest received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Olive Crest staff, the children and the foster parents. Our review also included visits to a sample of certified foster homes to complete a home inspection.

Results of Review

Overall, Olive Crest provided the services required by the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. The foster parents provided the children with clean, safe homes that were in compliance with Title 22 safety regulations. In addition, the social worker caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Olive Crest needs to improve their efforts to document communications with the County. Specifically, we noted the following:

- The Needs and Services Plans for two (25%) of the eight children reviewed did not contain the DCFS social worker's written approval.

- The case files for four (50%) of eight children did not contain documentation that Olive Crest's social workers conducted monthly telephonic updates with the DCFS social workers as required by the County contract. In all four cases, Olive Crest maintained documentation to support only one month of the two months sampled.

The details of our review, along with recommendation for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

On April 3, 2006, we discussed our report with Olive Crest who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Olive Crest management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Olive Crest for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

C David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, PhD., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Kerri Dunkelberger, Executive Director, Olive Crest Foster Family Agency
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005
OLIVE CREST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

To determine whether Olive Crest Foster Family Agency (Olive Crest or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited four of the 49 Los Angeles County and two of the five Orange County certified foster homes that Olive Crest billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in May and June 2005. We interviewed seven of the 11 foster parents and six of eight children placed in the six homes. We also reviewed the documentation in the case files for the 11 foster parents and eight children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Overall, Olive Crest provided the services required by the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Olive Crest met their expectations and the children stated they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Olive Crest also maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their case loads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

The foster parents provided children with clean and safe homes. Olive Crest social workers developed and modified comprehensive Needs and Services Plans and provided DCFS social workers and the Juvenile Court with timely and detailed Quarterly Reports that contained all the information required by the County contract.

Olive Crest did not always ensure that the foster parents' and the children's case files contain all the required information. In addition, Olive Crest also did not always obtain written approval from the DCFS social workers for the children's of Needs and Services plans. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Parent Certification

- One (9%) of 11 foster parent's certification files did not contain proof of current auto insurance. Title 22 and the County contract require that documentation of current auto insurance be maintained in the foster parent's file. The foster parent was able

to show proof of current auto insurance at the time of the home visit and she also provided the Agency with a copy of the insurance certificate following the visit.

- One (9%) of 11 foster parents completed only nine of 15 required hours of ongoing training prior to recertification. The County contract requires that Olive Crest provide certified foster parents with 15 hours of annual ongoing training. Prior to the issuance of this report, the foster parent completed an additional six hours of ongoing training.

Children's Records

- One (13%) of eight placed children was not visited by an Olive Crest social worker on a weekly basis during the first three months of placement as required by the County contract. The child was visited three times a month during the first three months of placement.

- Four (50%) of eight children's files did not contain documentation that Olive Crest's social workers were providing monthly telephonic updates to the children's DCFS social worker as required by the County contract. In all four cases, Olive Crest maintained documentation to support only one month of the two months sampled.

Needs and Services Plans

- Two (25%) of eight children's Needs and Services Plans did not contain the written approval from the DCFS social workers prior to Plans' implementation. In addition, there was no documentation to indicate that efforts had been made to obtain the written approval. The County contract requires Agencies to obtain written approval from the DCFS social worker prior to implementing Needs and Services Plans.

Recommendations

Olive Crest management:

1. **Ensure that proof of current automobile insurance is maintained for certified foster parents.**

2. **Ensure that foster parents complete the required number of training hours prior to their annual recertification.**

3. **Ensure that staff conduct weekly visits with children during the first three months of placement.**

4. **Ensure that the DCFS social workers give written approval of Needs and Services Plans prior to the implementation of the plans.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services that Olive Crest billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed six of eight children placed in six certified foster homes and seven of the eight foster parents to confirm the services that Olive Crest billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster children and parents interviewed stated that the services they receive from Olive Crest met their expectations and their assigned social workers visit them regularly.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether social workers' case loads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed Olive Crest's Directors and supervising social workers and reviewed case load statistics and payroll records for May and June 2005.

Results

Each social worker's caseload averaged eight placements and the supervising social worker supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Olive Crest's staff meets the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether Olive Crest conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

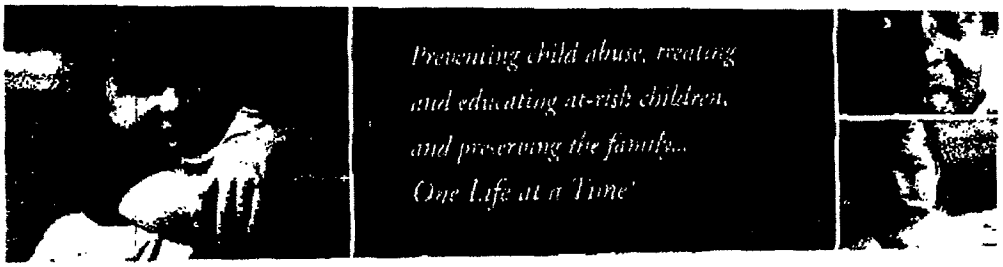
We interviewed Olive Crest's Director. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Olive Crest's Directors, supervising social workers and social workers possess the required education (college degrees) and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Olive Crest completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.



www.olivecrest.org

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April 5, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Olive Crest Foster and Adoption Family Agency/Kerri Dunkelberger (714) 543-5437 x1164

Subject: **Olive Crest Foster Family Agency Contract Review**

Dear Mayor and Supervisors:

Olive Crest has had the privilege of serving the youth of Los Angeles County for over fifteen years. We have seen hundreds of children reunited with their families and participated in numerous adoptions. With the recent expansion of our WRAP contracts and our Adoption and Support Services contract, we are now working more closely with the County of Los Angeles than ever before. Olive Crest is committed to providing excellence in the care of both children and families. Your evaluation of our program allows us to further enhance our procedures and share those practices that are working well with others. Alice Marutani and Brian Henricks have been very helpful with their feedback.

The following addresses each recommendation listed in the Foster Family Agency Audit Report:

1. Ensure that proof of current automobile insurance is maintained for certified foster parents.

It has been our practice to update all required documents at the time of annual re-certification. Historically, Olive Crest has captured recertification dates on an Excel spreadsheet. We recently purchased software that maintains this information along with a tickler file that will allow us to update automobile insurance prior to the expiration date.

California Alliance
ECFA
United Way
ACCREDITED COA

2. Ensure that foster parents complete the required number of training hours prior to their annual recertification.

Olive Crest provides many opportunities to complete the required training hours in any given year. We are also partnering with other agencies to enhance our training calendar. We do not recertify a family that has not completed the required training and would not move forward with new placements should a family be out of compliance. Olive Crest will continue to enforce these compliance guidelines and consider creative ways (i.e. In-Home, On-Line trainings) to meet the needs of our busy families. Olive Crest will consider respite for current placements (with the support of the County Social Worker) should a family not perceive this as a fundamental requirement for their certification.

All of our families sign an agreement, prior to their initial certification, that they will complete fifteen hours of on-going training. For those counties that have required only twelve hours of training, we have increased the requirement to fifteen hours as a "best practice" standard and to make all of our homes available for Los Angeles County placements.

3. Ensure that staff conducts weekly visits with children during the first three months of placement.

In Orange County, foster children are seen by Olive Crest case management staff weekly within the first 30 days of placement and, if clinically appropriate, decreased to a minimum of three visits a month. In the Los Angeles foster child case cited, the Orange County procedures were followed instead of following the LA policy which states that, "the foster child will be seen weekly during the first 90 days of placement and bi-monthly thereafter with 14 days minimum between visits." This supervision omission has been corrected.

4. Ensure that the DCFS social workers give written approval of Needs and Service Plans prior to the implementation of the plans.

This has long been an obstacle for Olive Crest case managers to obtain a signature on the Needs and Service Plans by the County Social Worker. We keep record of our attempts to procure signatures in the form of FAX cover sheets. In the future, we will make additional efforts to meet concurrently with the CSW and/or request signatures from available CSW Supervisors.

We strive to serve Los Angeles County in the most efficient and effective manner possible, and appreciate your feedback. If you have further questions, please contact Kerri Dunkelberger at (714) 543-5437 x1164.

Sincerely,

Kerri Dunkelberger
Executive Director
Foster and Adoption Division