COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2706
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

WENDY L. WATANABE
CHIEF DEPUTY

January 25, 2008

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **FAMILY SOLUTIONS, INC. CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Family Solutions, Inc. (Family Solutions or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Family Solutions, 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.

Family Solutions 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 26 certified foster homes. Six DCFS children were placed in three of the homes. Family Solutions is located in Santa Ana in Orange County.

DCFS pays Family Solutions 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, Family Solutions receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents

between $624 and $790 per month, per child. Family Solutions was paid approximately $136,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Family Solutions was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed Family Solutions' staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Family Solutions generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, Family Solutions' foster parents were appropriately certified in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Family Solutions also ensured that their social workers caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Family Solutions needs to ensure foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- Two Family Solutions' social workers did not meet the educational requirements. One social worker obtained her education at an unaccredited university and the other social worker did not possess an appropriate Master's Degree. Family Solutions reported that the social workers whose degrees or qualifications did not meet the regulations are no longer with the Agency.

- One home visited did not have an operable smoke detector in the hallway to the children's bedroom or adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions.

- Family Solutions also did not always ensure that children received timely dental examinations. Two of five children's annual dental examinations were approximately 45 days past due at the time of our review while a third child's initial dental exam was conducted six months late.

- Three of the five Needs and Services Plans reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social workers as required.

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

Review of Report

On December 18, 2007, we discussed our report with Family Solutions who was in general agreement with the findings. In their attached response, Family Solutions management has indicated the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Family Solutions 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: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
John L. Peel, Executive Director, Family Solutions, Inc. FFA
Tori Farhad, Programs Director, Family Solutions FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FAMILY SOLUTIONS, INC.
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Family Solutions, Inc., a Foster Family Agency (Family Solutions or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited two of the three Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Family Solutions billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in April and May 2007 and interviewed two of the three foster parents and four of the five children placed in the two homes. We also reviewed the case files for the three foster parents and five children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Family Solutions needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes. In addition, Family Solutions needs to ensure children's Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) contain the signature of the children's DCFS social workers indicating the social workers' approval of the NSPs. The Agency also needs to ensure that children receive initial and annual dental examinations in accordance with the timeframes specified in the County contract.

Foster Home Visitation

- One (50%) of the two foster homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions as required. In addition, this home did not have an operable smoke detector in the hallway to the children's bedroom as required.

- One (50%) of the two foster homes visited did not did not adequately secure kitchen knives as required.

NSPs and Children's Case Files

- Three (60%) of the five NSPs reviewed did not contain the signatures of the children's DCFS social workers indicating the social workers' approval of the NSPs as required. Family Solutions sent the three NSPs to the DCFS social workers for

approval. However, the Agency did not follow-up when the NSPs were not returned signed.

- One (20%) of the five children's case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the child received a weekly allowance as required. This child's case file indicated that the child did not receive their allowance four times during a two month period. The County contract requires that foster parents maintain a weekly allowance log indicating the date, the amount of allowance the child received and the child's signature upon receipt of the allowance.

Medical Services

- One (20%) of the five children's initial dental examination was conducted approximately six months late. In addition, two (40%) of five children's annual dental examinations were approximately 45 days late at the time of our review. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations require that the Agency arrange for children to have an initial dental examination within thirty days of placement, and that annual dental examinations be conducted no more than a year from the initial examination.

Recommendations

Family Solutions management:

1. **Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Ensure foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions and knives.**

3. **Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms.**

4. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and children's case files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations, including the DCFS social workers' approval and weekly allowance logs.**

5. **Ensure that the children's initial and annual dental examinations are conducted within the timeframes specified in the County contract.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Family Solutions billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed four children placed in three Family Solutions certified foster homes and two foster parents to confirm the services Family Solutions billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Family Solutions' social workers' caseloads do not exceed fifteen 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 Family Solutions' administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Overall, Family Solutions' social workers carried an average caseload of nine cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Family Solutions' staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training and performance evaluations to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Family Solutions' director and reviewed each employee's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Family Solutions' director and supervising social worker possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, Family Solutions conducted appropriate hiring clearances and provided annual performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract.

Two of Family Solutions' social workers did not meet the educational requirements of the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The first social worker obtained her education at an unaccredited university. The second social worker did not possess an appropriate Master's Degree. In addition, the Agency did not have copies of the other two social worker's college transcripts on file to verify the social workers completed coursework/classes required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Recommendations

Family Solutions management:

6. **Ensure that social workers possess the appropriate educational requirements.**

7. **Ensure that college transcripts are obtained for social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

Family Solutions, Inc.

Turning Disadvantaged Children into Advantaged Adults for 21 Years!

Board of Directors

Richard A. Steele
Chair
Robert R. Anglen
Vice Chair
Donald Brown
Vice Chair
David A. McCoy
Treasurer
Stephen W. Sawdon
Secretary
Laura Hunter
Immediate Past
Board Chair

Board Members

Mark A. Barreca
Lazaros Bouldoux
Anthony Brown
Bill Edwards
Richard Farmer
Mary Kay Garcia
Joyce A. Hearn
Gene Hernandez
Diane Koss
Jerry Kraus
Virginia Neal
Joseph W. Pontieri
John L. Peel
Raul A. Ramos
George Teats

Honorary Lifetime Members

Ralph Schroeder
Kay Trotte

Lifetime Achievement Honorees

Gene Hernandez
Tim & Mary Salmon

December 27, 2007

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

FROM: Tori Farhad
Programs Director

SUBJECT: FAMILY SOLUTIONS, INC. CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER

Please find the attached Corrective Action Plan for Family Solutions Inc.'s Contract Reviews by the Department of Auditor- Controller's Office.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (714) 835-1333, ext. 119.

Sincerely,

Tori Farhad

Corporate Office
203 N. Golden Circle Dr., Suite 101 * Santa Ana * California 92705 * (714) 835-1333 * Fax (714) 835-1335
Satellite Offices
6820 Indiana Avenue, Suite 150 * Riverside * California * 92506 * (951) 788-4370 * Fax (951) 788-4369
6528 Greenleaf Avenue, Suite 211 * Whittier * California * 90601 * (562) 696-5499 * Fax (562) 696-6691

familysolutions.us

Accountability Respect Kindness Integrity Diversity Service

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FAMILY SOLUTIONS, INC.
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Recommendations

Family Solutions management:

1. Ensure that staff adequately monitors foster homes to ensure they comply with the County Contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

2. Ensure foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions and knives.

3. Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms.

4. Ensure that NSPs and children's case files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

5. Ensure that the children's initial and annual dental examinations are conducted within the timeframes specified in the County contract.

Corrective Action Plan

1. Staff will monitor the foster homes on the regular visits to the home and remind the parents of Title 22 regulations. On their weekly visits, FFA social workers will ensure that the children receive their weekly allowances. The social worker will ask the children as well as the foster parents. Furthermore, the social worker will ensure that this is documented properly.

2. Staff will remind foster parents to adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions and knives. Staff currently completes a full inspection of the homes every April and October. They will further inspect the homes at least once in between.

3. Foster homes will be monitored for operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms.

4. The NSPs will be completed by the FFA social workers and reviewed and approved by the Clinical Supervisor for accuracy. Family Solutions, Inc. has started utilizing the new format designed by the County. The FFA Social Worker will fax the report to the County Social Worker and follow up at least three times. The supervisor for the CSW will be notified at least once as well, if signatures are not obtained.

5. FFA social workers will ensure that children receive their initial and annual dental examinations within the specified timeframes. (Thirty days for the initial exam and then annually.)

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Recommendation

Family Solutions management:

6. Ensure that social workers possess the appropriate educational requirements.

7. Ensure that college transcripts are obtained for social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Corrective Action Plan

6. The Human Resource Director will ensure that the newly hired social workers all possess the appropriate educational requirements. She

will check the degrees to ensure that they are from an accredited college/University before the Social Worker is hired.

7. Human Resource Director will ensure that all social workers have college transcripts along with a copy of their degrees in their personnel file.

(The social workers whose degrees or qualifications did not meet the regulation are no longer with the agency.)