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

WENDY L. WATANABE
ACTING AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
MARIA M. OMS

June 30, 2008

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

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Acting Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **CHILDREN'S BUREAU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Children's Bureau of Southern California (CBSC or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with CBSC, 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.

CBSC 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 193 certified foster homes in which 168 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. CBSC's headquarters is located in the First District.

DCFS paid CBSC a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, CBSC received 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. CBSC was paid approximately $3,297,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether CBSC 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 CBSC staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several foster parents and children.

Results of Review

Overall, the Agency complied with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The 14 foster homes we visited were well maintained. The foster parents stated that the services they received from CBSC generally met their expectations and the children we interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

The staff working on the County contract at CBSC possessed the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations. CBSC also ensured that social workers' caseloads did not exceed the limits established by CDSS Title 22 regulations. CBSC developed Needs and Services Plans that contained all the required information. However, CBSC did not always ensure that Quarterly Reports included a reassessment of children's unmet needs and efforts made by the Agency to meet those needs.

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

Review of Report

On June 2, 2008, we discussed our report with CBSC who was in general agreement with the finding. In their attached response, CBSC's management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendation. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank CBSC 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.

WLW:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Doug Hayes, Chair, Board of Directors, CBSC FFA
Lou Graham, Director, CBSC FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
CHILDREN'S BUREAU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Children's Bureau of Southern California Foster Family Agency (CBSC or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited 14 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that CBSC billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in December 2007 and January 2008, and interviewed 21 of the 27 foster parents, eight of the 36 children and observed 12 toddlers placed in the 14 homes. We also reviewed the case files for 27 foster parents and 20 children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations and the foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. The toddlers that we observed appeared to be well cared for and happy. In addition, the 14 foster homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

CBSC's social workers visited the children the required number of times and appropriately documented the visits in the children's case files. CBSC also ensured that children's medical and dental needs were met. In addition, all 20 Needs and Services Plans we reviewed were comprehensive, timely, and contained all the required information.

CBSC did not always ensure that Quarterly Reports included a reassessment of children's unmet needs and efforts made by the Agency to meet those needs. One of the twenty Quarterly Reports we reviewed did not include a reassessment of unmet needs related to a child who was afraid of the dark and had problems wetting his bed at night.

Recommendation

1. **CBSC management ensure that Quarterly Reports include a reassessment of children's unmet needs and efforts made by the Agency to meet those needs.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed eight children and observed 12 toddlers placed in 14 CBSC certified foster homes and interviewed 21 foster parents to confirm the services CBSC billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations and the foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. The toddlers also appeared to be well cared for and happy.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether CBSC 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 CBSC's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Overall, CBSC's 14 social workers carried an average of 11 cases and the Agency's four supervising social workers each supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether CBSC 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 CBSC's administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

CBSC's administrator, supervising social workers, and social workers possessed the education and work experience required. The Agency also conducted hiring clearances, provided ongoing training, and performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior monitoring review completed by the Auditor-Controller.

Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on February 23, 2007.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained one outstanding recommendation. CBSC fully implemented the outstanding recommendation.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

Lou Graham
Director of Foster Care and Adoptions
1910 Magnolia Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90007
Telephone: 213.342-0116 or 800 730-3933
Fax: 213.342-0253

June 12, 2008

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

From: Lou Graham, Director of Foster Care and Adoptions
Children's Bureau of Southern California Foster Family Agency

Subject: Response to Children's Bureau of Southern California Contract Review – a Department of Children and Family Services Foster Family Agency Service Provider

Dear Supervisors:

We would once again like to thank the Auditor-Controller's office for their professional manner and responsive approach during the comprehensive review of our Foster Family Agency. Ms. Maricela Morfin, Ms. Alice Manutari and Mr. Brian Henricks were professional, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. Children's Bureau of Southern California (CBSC) has served the community of Los Angeles for over a hundred years and we hope to continue our partnership with Los Angeles County for many more years to come. CBSC is committed to providing the best possible services to our children and families.

The following addresses the one recommendation listed in the Foster Family Agency Contract Review Report:

1. CBSC management ensure that Quarterly Reports address a reassessment of children's unmet needs and efforts made by the Agency to meet those needs.

This statement applied to one of the 20 Quarterly Reports reviewed during CBSC's contract review. The foster family involved was spoken to about the necessity of ongoing communication with their CBSC social worker regarding unmet needs and intended strategies to be implemented to ensure that an updated Needs and Services Plan can be put into place and approved by the County Social Worker (CSW) and CBSC social worker. Also, this finding was discussed with the CBSC foster care team on 4/29/08 at their team meeting as a reminder that families should be reviewing intended interventions with their CBSC social worker and obtaining CSW approval before such interventions are implemented. The intervention should then be documented in the Needs and Services Plan and monitored on an ongoing basis for progress and any changes required.

We appreciate the Auditor-Controller's recognition of our program and look forward to continuing our positive working partnership with Los Angeles County

Sincerely,

Lou Graham
Director of Foster Care and Adoptions

Cc: Alex Morales, CEO and President of Children's Bureau
Brian Henricks, Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division