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DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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September 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: **OLIVE CREST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

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

Background

DCFS contracts with Olive Crest, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster 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 60 certified foster homes in which 37 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Olive Crest's headquarters is in Orange County and the Agency has offices in the Fourth and Fifth Districts.

DCFS paid Olive Crest 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, Olive Crest 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. DCFS paid Olive Crest approximately $900,000 during Fiscal Year 2007-08.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Olive Crest 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 Olive Crest 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 Olive Crest met or exceeded their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Olive Crest ensured that social workers' caseloads did not exceed the limits established by CDSS Title 22 regulations and that staff working on the County contract possessed the education and work experience required.

Olive Crest needs to ensure that case files and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- Three of the six case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the DCFS social workers were updated monthly regarding the children's progress.
- Two of the six children's initial dental examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes.
- Two of the six NSPs reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required.

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

Review of Report

We discussed our report with Olive Crest on July 23, 2008. In their attached response, Olive Crest indicates general agreement with the recommendations and 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.

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
Chris Wing, Chairperson, Board of Directors, Olive Crest
Kerri Dunkelberger, Executive Director, Foster & Adoption Division, Olive Crest
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
OLIVE CREST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

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 60 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Olive Crest billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in August and September 2007, and interviewed five foster parents, two of the eight children, and observed four toddlers placed in the four homes. We also reviewed the case files for seven foster parents and eight children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster children we 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 or exceeded their expectations. The four toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and happy.

Olive Crest needs to ensure that children's initial dental examinations are conducted within the required timeframes. The Agency also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSP) and Quarterly Reports are prepared within the required timeframes and that NSPs are approved by the children's DCFS social worker. We specifically noted the following:

Children's Case Files

- Three (50%) of the six case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the DCFS social workers were updated monthly regarding the children's progress.

- Two (34%) of the six children's initial dental examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes. The examinations were conducted 29 and 45 days late, respectively.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- One (17%) of the six initial NSPs reviewed was not prepared within 30 days from the date of the child's placement. The NSP was prepared 21 days late. In addition, four of the remaining five initial NSPs were not dated. As a result, we could not determine if they were prepared within the required timeframes.

- One (17%) of the six NSPs reviewed was not updated within the required timeframes. The NSP was updated 77 days late.

- Two (33%) of the six NSPs reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required. Our prior report also noted that Olive Crest did not always ensure that NSPs were approved by the children's DCFS social worker. Prior to the conclusion of our review, Olive Crest received the required approval.

- One (17%) of the six Quarterly Reports reviewed was prepared 27 days late. In addition, two Quarterly Reports did not contain the date they were sent to the DCFS social worker. As a result, we could not determine if the Quarterly Reports had been prepared timely.

Recommendations

Olive Crest management ensure:

1. **DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.**

2. **Children's initial dental examinations are conducted within the required timeframes.**

3. **NSPs and Quarterly Reports are prepared within the required timeframes.**

4. **NSPs are approved by the DCFS social worker.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed two children and observed four toddlers placed in four Olive Crest certified foster homes and interviewed five foster parents to confirm the services Olive Crest 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 or exceeded their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and happy.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

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

Results

Overall, Olive Crest's three full-time social workers carried an average caseload of 13 cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised an average of three social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Olive Crest 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.

Verification

We interviewed Olive Crest's administrator and 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 administrator, supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required. The Agency also conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training 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

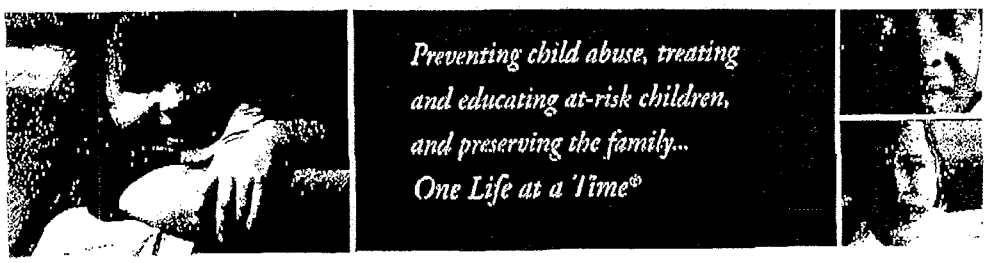
We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2004-05 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on April 12, 2006.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained four outstanding recommendations. Olive Crest fully implemented three of the recommendations. As indicated earlier, the finding relating to recommendation four contained in this report was also noted during the prior year's review.

Recommendation

5. **Olive Crest management implement the outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal Year 2004-05 monitoring report.**



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August 1, 2008

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

From: Kerri Dunkelberger
Executive Director of Foster and Adoptions

Subject:OLIVE CREST CONTRACT REVIEW

It has been Olive Crest's privilege to serve the county of Los Angeles County through the provision of foster and adoption services. We look forward to future of expanding ways we can impact the children of Los Angeles County. It is our desire to meet all contract requirements and support the dedication of the County service personnel and their care of dependent children.

Pursuant to your review, this letter is in response to the final audit results of Olive Crest FFA, received on July 30, 2008. Overall, Olive Crest is in general agreement with the following findings and observations:

RECOMMENDATION #1: Agency needs to ensure reports document the date the report was sent to the DCFS workers and/or DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #1: Olive Crest FFA staff will ensure reports document the date the report was sent to the DCFS workers and DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress. Olive Crest is confident that social workers are updated at least monthly on the progress of children, but there has been some failure to record some of the contact dates. All FFA staff have been counseled regarding this matter. Continued non-compliance may result in action against the employee, which may include: Verbal warnings, written warnings, and/or suspension. Olive Crest FFA has corrected and will maintain contract and Title 22 standards regarding this matter. Olive Crest FFA requires staff to document the date reports are sent to the DCFS workers and ensure DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress. Olive Crest will perform internal report and file audits to insure compliance.

California Alliance
United Way
COA

RECOMMENDATION #2: Agency needs to ensure children's initial dental examinations are conducted within the required timeframes.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #2: Olive Crest FFA staff will ensure foster homes are complying with children's initial dental examinations within the required timeframes. Olive Crest FFA requires foster parents to adhere to the dental examination timeframes and document all dental visits. The incident of noncompliance occurred in a veteran home, which uses a dentist that has been very supportive of the foster children and foster parents. When the dentist could not accommodate an appointment within the required timeframe, the foster parents set the appointment at a later time. This foster family has been advised to prioritize required timeframes over service provider. The recommendation noted during the review has been corrected and maintained according to contract and Title 22 standards. Olive Crest FFA staff will continue to assess the compliance of county required dental examinations during county contracted visits to the foster home and during internal file audits. Continued non-compliance by foster parents will require action against the foster parent(s), which may include: Administrative hold, replacement of minors in the foster home, and/or decertification when necessary.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Agency needs to ensure NSPs and Quarterly reports are prepared within the required timeframes.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #3: Olive Crest FFA staff will ensure NSPs and Quarterly reports are prepared within the required timeframes. All FFA staff have been counseled regarding this matter, and continued noncompliance resulted in verbal warning, written warning, and termination of the employee. Olive Crest FFA has corrected and will maintain the contract and Title 22 standards regarding this matter. Olive Crest FFA requires staff to prepare NSPs and Quarterly reports within the required the contract and Title 22 timeframes. Olive Crest will perform internal report and file audits to insure compliance.

RECOMMENDATION #4: NSPs are approved by the DCFS social worker.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #4: Initially, two NSPs were found without approval from the DCFS social worker. Prior to the end of the audit, the auditor noted Olive Crest did have approval from the DCFS social workers. Olive Crest FFA staff will continue to show due effort to obtain approval by the DCFS social worker. Olive Crest staff will record efforts to obtain approval from the DCFS social worker in the client file. At least three attempts will be made by Olive Crest staff. All FFA staff have been counseled regarding this matter. Olive Crest FFA will maintain contract and Title 22 standards regarding this matter. Olive Crest will perform internal report and file audits to insure continued compliance.

RECOMMENDATION #5: NSPs were not approved by the DCFS social worker in past audit.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #5: As indicated in CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN #4, Olive Crest has implemented the recommendations outstanding in the 2004-2005 monitoring report.

Olive Crest appreciated working with the staff of the County of Los Angeles Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division. The staff conducted themselves in a professional and positive manner, always ensuring a high quality of service to the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Kerri Dunkelberger
Executive Director of Foster and Adoptions