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

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: **INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING FOSTER HOMES, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of the Institute for Black Parenting Foster Homes, Inc. (IBP or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with IBP, 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.

IBP 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 24 certified foster homes in which 48 DCFS children where placed at the time of our review. IBP's headquarters is in the Second District and the Agency also has an office in Riverside.

DCFS paid IBP 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, the Agency 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 IBP approximately $1 million during Fiscal Year 2007-08.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether IBP 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 the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and the foster parents.

Results of Review

IBP needs to ensure that foster homes, case files, and staff are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- In one of the four homes visited the carpet was worm and torn and needs to be replaced, one of the bathrooms needs to be painted, and in another bathroom the bathtub and shower liner need to be replaced. In addition, the smoke detector in the hallway leading to the children's bedroom was inoperable. Prior to the conclusion of our review, IBP decertified this foster home and placed the two children living in the home in another foster home.

- Two of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain documentation that the Agency conducted criminal/child abuse clearances for two adults that resided in or frequently visited the foster homes as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations. Subsequent to the conclusion of our review, the Agency provided documentation that the clearances had been conducted. However, one of the adults had a criminal background. As a result, IBP sent a letter to the foster parent instructing her to not allow the adult to visit the home or have any contact with the children living in the home.

- None of the eight Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed contained goals that were specific, measurable, and time limited. In addition, four of the eight NSPs did not indicate the reason the children were in placement.

- Four of the eight case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the children were visited weekly by IBP's social workers as required by the County contract.

- Two of the eight children's dental and medical examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes.

- One of the three children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication. Two of the three children did

not have monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician documented in the children's case files as required.

- IBP management did not always ensure that foster parents complied with the monthly clothing allowance requirement.

- Two IBP social workers carried more cases than allowed by the County contract. In addition, two IBP social workers did not meet the educational requirements of the County contract.

It should be noted that ten recommendations contained in this report were also reported in the prior monitoring review (report dated 4/12/2006). In IBP's response to our prior report, IBP indicated they had taken action to implement the recommendations. However, based on our current review, the majority of the recommendations remain outstanding.

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

Review of Report

We discussed our report with IBP management on July 21, 2008. In their attached response, IBP indicates general agreement with our findings and the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We notified DCFS of the results of our review and suggest DCFS closely monitor IBP's implementation of their corrective action plan to ensure all recommendations are implemented timely.

We thank IBP 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
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Zena Olgesby, Chair, Board of Directors, Institute for Black Parenting FFA
Shelley Rasmussen, Programs Director, Institute for Black Parenting FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING FOSTER HOMES, INC.
FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether the Institute for Black Parenting Foster Homes, Inc. Foster Family Agency (IBP 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 24 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that IBP billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in May and June 2007 and interviewed the five foster parents and the eight children placed in the four homes. We also reviewed the certification files for four foster parents and eight children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

IBP needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example, IBP needs to ensure that criminal/child abuse clearances are conducted for all the adults that reside in or frequently visit the foster home and that foster parents are CPR certified and receive the required number of annual continuing education hours. IBP also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), Quarterly Reports, and Termination Reports contain all the required information. In addition, IBP needs to ensure that children receive dental and medical examinations within the required timeframes and that children taking psychotropic medication have current court authorizations for the administration of the medication and are seen monthly by the prescribing physician. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitation

- One (25%) of the four homes visited had worn and torn carpet that needed to be replaced, a children's bathroom that needed to be painted, and a shower liner and bath tub in another bathroom that needed to be replaced. In addition, the smoke detector in the hallway leading to the children's bedroom was inoperable. Prior to the conclusion of our review, IBP decertified this foster home and placed the two children living in the home in another foster home.

- Two (50%) of the four foster homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions.

Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Foster Parent Certification

- Two (50%) of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain documentation that the Agency conducted criminal/child abuse clearances for two adults that resided in or frequently visited the foster homes as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations. Subsequent to the conclusion of our review, the Agency provided documentation that the clearances had been conducted. However, one of the adults had a criminal background. As a result, IBP sent a letter to the foster parent instructing her to not allow the adult to visit the home or have any contact with the children living in the home.

- One (25%) of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain a current CPR certificate. The CPR certificate had expired approximately one month prior to the start of our review. In addition, this foster parent did not attend any of the required 15 hours of annual continuing education during the last certification year.

- One (25%) of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain references for the foster parent as required.

Needs and Services Plans

- None of the eight NSPs reviewed contained goals that were specific, measurable, and time limited. In addition, four of the eight NSPs did not indicate the reason the children were in placement.

- Three (38%) of the eight NSPs reviewed did not contain documentation that the children and foster parents were offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.

- Three (38%) of the eight NSPs reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required.

Quarterly and Termination Reports

- None of the eight Quarterly Reports reviewed contained a discussion of progress made towards achieving goals. In addition, two of the eight Quarterly Reports reviewed were both prepared 71 days late.

- Two Quarterly Reports did not contain an Emancipation Preparation Contract as required for children 14 years old and over. At the time of our review, three children were over 14 years old. In addition, one of the Quarterly Reports did not address the status of the child's Transitional Independent Living Plan.

Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that Quarterly Reports contained all the required information.

- Seven (64%) of the 11 Termination Reports reviewed were not dated. As a result, we could not determine if the reports were submitted to the children's DCFS social worker within 30 days of the children's discharge from the Agency. In addition, for one child, a termination report was not prepared even though the child was discharged from the Agency.

Children's Case Files

- Four (50%) of the eight case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the children were visited weekly by IBP's social workers during their first three months of placement as required by the County contract. During this period, six required visits were not documented for these four children.

- Six (75%) of the eight children's required home visits were not made within the timeframes required by the County contract. The County contract requires IBP's social workers to visit children twice a month, approximately 14 days apart after the child has been placed in the home over three months. The six children had eight home visits that were conducted an average of 28 days apart.

Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that children were visited the required number of times and within the required timeframes.

Medical Services

- One (33%) of the three children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication. In addition, the child did not have the medication incorporated into their NSP.

- Two (67%) of the three children taking psychotropic medication did not have monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician documented in the children's case files as required.

Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that children taking psychotropic medication had a current court authorization for the administration of the medication and had monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician.

- Two (25%) of the eight children's initial dental and medical examinations were not conducted within the required timeframes. At the time of our review, the initial examinations were approximately four months past due.

- Two (25%) of the eight children's annual medical examinations were conducted late. The examinations were two and six months late, respectively. In addition, one child's annual dental examination was conducted ten months late.

Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that children's initial and annual dental examinations were conducted within the required timeframes.

Recommendations

IBP management ensure:

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

2. **Foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.**

3. **Foster homes are maintained in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

4. **Foster homes have operable smoke detectors.**

5. **Criminal/child abuse clearances are conducted for all the adults that reside in or frequently visit the foster home.**

6. **Foster parents are CPR certified, receive the required number of annual continuing education hours and have appropriate references.**

7. **NSPs contain goals that are specific, measurable, time limited, and are approved by the DCFS social worker.**

8. **Children and foster parents are offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.**

9. **Quarterly Reports are prepared within the required timeframes and contain a discussion of progress made towards achieving goals.**

10. **For children 14 years old and over, Quarterly Reports contain an Emancipation Preparation Contract and a Transitional Independent Living Plan.**

11. **Termination Reports contain all the required information and are prepared for all children discharged from the Agency.**

12. **Children are visited weekly during the first three months of placement and twice a month, approximately 14 days apart, after the first three months of placement by the Agency's social workers.**

13. **Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication, are seen**

monthly by their prescribing physician, and have the psychotropic medication incorporated into their NSPs.

14. Children's dental and medical examinations are conducted within the required timeframes.

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed seven children placed in four IBP certified foster homes and four foster parents to confirm the services IBP billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from IBP generally met their expectation and the children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. However, one child stated that her foster parent did not provide enough clothing. IBP's Program Statement requires foster parents to spend a minimum of $50 per month for clothing for each child and to maintain documentation to support the purchases. The foster parent could not provide documentation to support clothing purchases during the eight months that the child was placed in the home. In addition, the foster parent indicated that she was not aware of the clothing allowance policy. Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that foster parents complied with the monthly clothing allowance requirement.

Recommendation

15. IBP management ensure that foster parents comply with the monthly clothing allowance requirement.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

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

Results

IBP's supervising social worker supervised an average of six social workers. However, we noted two IBP social workers carried more cases than allowed by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The two social workers carried an average caseload of 18 cases during the two-month period we reviewed. Our prior audit review also noted that IBP did not always ensure that their social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed.

Recommendations

IBP management:

16. **Ensure that social workers do not carry more cases than allowed by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

17. **Hire additional social workers if the number of cases exceeds the maximum number allowed by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether IBP staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by the 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 IBP's administrator and supervising social worker. We also reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

IBP's administrator and supervising social worker possessed the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff working

on the County contract. However, two of IBP's social workers did not meet the educational requirements of the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Both social workers did not possess a qualifying Master's Degree for a social worker position. In addition, one of the two social workers obtained her Master's Degree from a non-accredited university.

Recommendation

18. IBP management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the appropriate educational requirements.

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 Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on April 12, 2006.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained 11 outstanding recommendations. The findings related to 10 (91%) recommendations contained in this report were also noted in the prior monitoring review. In IBP's response to our prior report, IBP indicated they had taken action to implement the recommendations from our prior report. However, based on our current review, the majority of the recommendations remain not implemented.

Recommendation

19. IBP management implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring report.

INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING

▲ CORPORATE OFFICE/SAR
11222 S. La Cienega Blvd.,
Suite 233
Inglewood, CA 90304
(310) 693-9959
Fax: (310) 693-9979

△ FAMILY PRESERVATION
333 Florence Ave.
Suite 320-C
Inglewood, CA 90301
(310) 680-0820
Fax: (310) 680-0824

△ INLAND EMPIRE
3120 Chicago Ave.,
Suite 130
Riverside, CA 92507
(951) 782-2800
Fax: (951) 782-2805

△ APSS SPA 6
4340 Leimert Blvd.
Suite 202
Los Angeles, CA 90008
(323) 389-8040
Fax: (323) 389-8046

△ LOUISIANA
3501 N. Causeway Blvd.
Suite 320
Metairie, LA 70002
(504) 836-7456
Fax: (504) 836-7457

July 29, 2008

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

FROM: Cynthia M. Willard, LCSW
Assistant Executive Director

SUBJECT: CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FOR
INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING
CONTRACT REVIEW, A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN
AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
SERVICE PROVIDER

The Institute for Black Parenting (IBP) continues to be a multi-service agency providing Adoption, Foster Care, Family Preservation and First 5 LA Parenting Teen services in Los Angeles County.

We are submitting this plan of correction to ensure that we continue to provide quality services to our children and families and correct noted deficiencies.

Audit Recommendation #1

Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Correction

Management has reviewed with all staff at the Foster Care Unit meeting, the use of the home audit checklist. Staff are to use the checklist on a quarterly basis to ensure that all homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 regulations. QA (Quality Assurance) will monitor parent files for the completed audit checklists.

Audit Recommendation #2

Foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.

Correction

The Social Worker visited two homes that were sited. Social Worker reviewed Title 22 regulations with foster parents and discussed the importance of storing cleaning solutions, etc. so that they are consistently inaccessible to children. Agency conducted two (2) trainings and refresher review with all foster parents to revisit Title 22 regulations and stress stringent monitoring of the homes by social workers.

A letter was also sent to all foster parents noting this deficiency. Social Workers followed up with the foster parents at their home visit to ensure that they received and understood the information in the letter sent by IBP.

Audit Recommendation #3

Foster homes are maintained in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Correction

QA has visited all certified homes to ensure that they are in compliance with Title 22 regulations. In addition, Social Workers have been trained to identify deficiencies at bi-monthly home visits.

Audit Recommendation #4

Foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways leading to the children's bedrooms.

Correction

Social Workers have been trained to test smoke detectors during home visits to ensure that batteries are charged and smoke detectors are operable.

Audit Recommendation #5

Criminal/child abuse clearances are conducted for all the adults that reside in or frequently visit the foster home.

Correction

Foster Parent cases will be reviewed by IBP Administration upon certification to ensure that criminal and child abuse clearances are conducted for all adults that reside in or frequently visit the foster home. Social Worker will check during bi-monthly visits to ensure that no new adults reside or frequently visit the home.

Audit Recommendation #6

Foster parents are CPR certified, receive the required number of annual continuing education hours, and have appropriate references.

Correction

Foster Parents have been notified of IBP's monthly and quarterly trainings, on line training options and trainings at community colleges. The Foster Care Unit Clerk alerts the case managers to the expiration of CPR/First Aid. Foster Parents are advised in advance to make sure they keep current. All references are documented in the case file.

Audit Recommendation #7

NSPs contain goals that are specific, measurable, time limited, and are approved by the DCFS Social Worker.

Correction

Two trainings have been held on the New Needs and Services Plan to ensure that they contain goals that are specific, measurable, time limited and are approved by the DCFS Social Worker. IBP Social Worker will document in the case file attempts to reach the DCFS Social Worker 3 times (2 Social Worker, 1 Supervisor).

Audit Recommendation #8

Children and foster parents are offered the opportunity to participate in the development of the NSPs.

Correction

A staff training was held to ensure that IBP Social Workers offer the Foster Parent and children the opportunity to participate in the development of the Needs and Services Plan.

Audit Recommendation #9

Quarterly reports are prepared within the required timeframes and contain a discussion of progress made towards achieving goals.

Correction

IBP Social Workers have attended the training on the use of the new NSP/Quarterly template provided by the county. We are now using this format.

- Quarterly reports document progress towards achieving goals. The supervisor will check to ensure that goals are met.
- The supervisor will monitor the cases to ensure that quarterly reports are prepared within the required timeframe.

Audit Recommendation #10

For children over 14 years old, Quarterly Reports contain an Emancipation Preparation Contract and a Transitional Independent Living Plan.

Correction

IBP Social Workers received training on preparation of Quarterly Reports which included Emancipation Preparation Contract and a Transitional Independent Living Plan. The supervisor will monitor.

Audit Recommendation #11

Termination Reports contain all the required information and are prepared for all children discharged from the Agency.

Correction

The Termination Report was revised to include the date of completion which had been omitted on the previous form. Social Workers were trained on the timely completion of this report within 30 days of discharge. The supervisor will monitor.

Audit Recommendation #12

Children are visited weekly during the first three months of placement and twice a month, approximately 14 days apart after the first three months of placement by the Agency's Social Workers.

Correction

The Foster Care Supervisor meets with each Social Worker on a bi-monthly (2 times) basis. The cases are reviewed for documents along with the caseload audit weekly report that documents visits. Dates of visitation are confirmed and progress reports reviewed for verification.

Audit Recommendation #13

Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication, are seen monthly by their prescribing physician, and have the psychotropic medication incorporated into their NSPs.

Correction

The IBP Social Worker will request the psychotropic medication authorization request and document the request in the case record every 6 months. The Social Worker follows up each month to ensure that the child is being seen monthly by the physician. This information is documented in the Needs and Services Plan. The supervisor will monitor.

Audit Recommendation #14

Children's dental and medical examinations are conducted within the required timeframes.

Correction

The QA Officer conducts a 10 and 20 day audit to review the case file for documentation of medical and dentals conducted within the first 30 days of placement. QA notifies the supervisor if documentation is not in the file which allows 10-20 more days to secure required documents.

Audit Recommendation #15

IBP management ensure that foster parents comply with the monthly clothing allowance requirement.

Correction

A letter was sent to all IBP certified parents regarding the minimum $50 clothing allowance for each month. Social Workers followed up with a review of the Foster Parent handbook which each foster parent received at certification. Also two trainings were held to review the foster parent handbook. Social Worker will verify monthly the clothing allowance and get receipts for the record.

Audit Recommendation #16

Ensure that social workers do not carry more cases than allowed by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Correction

IBP has processed part-time Social Workers in both offices, Inglewood and Riverside, to carry cases until full-time Social Workers can be hired. This will ensure that no Social Worker carries more than 15 cases.

Audit Recommendation #17

Hire additional social workers when the number of cases exceeds the maximum number allowed by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Correction

IBP has made provision to ensure that no caseload exceeds 15. See Correction #16 for specifics.

Audit Recommendation #18

IBP management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the appropriate educational requirements.

Correction

IBP administration reviews each resume and degree to ensure that Social Workers possess the appropriate educational requirements. Degrees are verified on line to ensure that schools are accredited.

Audit Recommendation #19

IBP management implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring report.

Correction

IBP's plan to implement the outstanding recommendations from the fiscal year 2005-2006 monitoring report are outlined in our responses to recommendations 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 above.