



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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September 22, 2010

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **HUDSON LYNDSEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW -
A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

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

DCFS contracted with Hudson Lyndsey, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency placed a child, it was required to monitor the placement until the child was discharged from the program. The Agency oversaw a total of 12 certified foster homes in which 27 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Hudson Lyndsey was located in the Second District. DCFS paid Hudson Lyndsey approximately \$570,000 during Fiscal Year 2008-09.

As a result of the Agency's ongoing program and fiscal non-compliance, DCFS ceased contracting with the Agency on November 1, 2009. The 27 children placed at Hudson Lyndsey during the time of our review were transferred to other Foster Family Agencies.

Results of Review

Before entering into any new contracts with the County, Hudson Lyndsey needs to improve their oversight of their foster homes and ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Hudson Lyndsey also needs to ensure that foster parent certification files, Needs and Services Plans

(NSPs), Termination Reports and children's case files contain all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

- Two of the four homes visited did not adequately secure knives. In addition, one of the two homes did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions.
- Two of the four foster homes visited were not maintained in compliance with the County contract. The child's mattress cover and sheets were stained and dirty in one home and the foster parent smoked cigarettes in the other home. The County contract requires that children not be subjected to second-hand smoke.
- Two of the four foster homes visited did not have an emergency contact list readily available as required. In addition, one of these two homes did not have a written disaster plan as required.
- One of the four foster homes visited did not conduct disaster drills with the children at least every six months.
- One of the four foster homes visited had an adult relative living in the home who did not pass her criminal clearance. Hudson Lyndsey requested an exception from the State's Community Care Licensing. However, the exception was still pending at the conclusion of our review.
- One of the five foster parents reviewed did not obtain a pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test within required timeframes. The exams were conducted four years after the foster parent's initial certification. CDSS Title 22 regulations require that pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis tests be conducted not more than one year prior to or seven days after certification.
- Three of the four NSPs reviewed were not sent to the DCFS social workers for approval as required. Our prior review also noted that Hudson Lyndsey did not always ensure that NSPs were sent to the DCFS social workers for approval.
- Two of the four NSPs reviewed did not indicate the length of placement as required.
- Three of the four NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not time-limited and measurable. In addition, two of the four NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not specific.
- Three of the four NSPs reviewed did not include a discussion of modification on services or the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the children's return to home, placement in another facility, or move to independent living as required.

- Two of the four NSPs reviewed did not contain documentation that the DCFS social workers were updated monthly regarding the children's progress.
- Two of the three Termination Reports reviewed did not contain a closing summary of the Agency's records related to placement.
- One of the four case files reviewed did not contain a signed copy of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Legal Rights of Teens or children's personal rights as required.
- One of the four children's annual medical examination was approximately three months past due at the time of our review. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided documentation that the examination was conducted.

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

Review of Report

As mentioned above, because of the Agency's ongoing program and fiscal non-compliance, DCFS ceased contracting with the Agency on November 1, 2009. The 27 children placed at Hudson Lyndsey during the time of our review were transferred to other Foster Family Agencies. As a result, Hudson Lyndsey did not submit a response to the recommendations contained in this report. Prior to receiving another DCFS Foster Family Agency contract, DCFS needs to ensure that Hudson Lyndsey is in compliance with the recommendations contained in this report. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review. In their attached response, DCFS indicates a follow-up is not necessary because Hudson Lyndsey's contract has not been renewed.

We thank Hudson Lyndsey for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA

Attachments

- c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, DCFS Director
Dr. Jackie Contreras, DCFS Chief Deputy Director
Darryl Lightfoot, Chair, Board of Directors, Hudson Lyndsey FFA
Cynthia Powell, Administrator, Hudson Lyndsey FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
HUDSON LYNDSEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009**

BACKGROUND

DCFS contracted with Hudson Lyndsey, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency placed a child, it was required to monitor the placement until the child was discharged from the program.

Under the contract, Hudson Lyndsey was required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversaw a total of 12 certified foster homes in which 27 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Hudson Lyndsey was located in the Second District.

As a result of the Agency's ongoing program and fiscal non-compliance, DCFS stopped contracting with the Agency on November 1, 2009. The 27 children placed at Hudson Lyndsey during the time of our review were transferred to other Foster Family Agencies. Prior to receiving another DCFS Foster Family Agency contract, DCFS needs to ensure that Hudson Lyndsey is in compliance with the recommendations contained in this report.

DCFS paid Hudson Lyndsey 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, Hudson Lyndsey received between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency paid the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. DCFS paid Hudson Lyndsey approximately \$570,000, during Fiscal Year 2008-09.

PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Hudson Lyndsey 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 foster parents.

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Hudson Lyndsey 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 12 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Hudson Lyndsey billed DCFS in February and March 2009, and interviewed four foster parents and two children placed in the four homes. In addition, we observed two toddlers who were too young to interview. We also reviewed the case files for five foster parents and four children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity. Our review was conducted during April and May 2009.

Results

The foster children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that they were happy with the services provided by the Agency.

Hudson Lyndsey needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Hudson Lyndsey also needs to ensure that foster parent certification files, Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), Termination Reports and children's case files contain all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitation and Foster Parent Certification

- Two (50%) of the four foster homes visited did not adequately secure knives. In addition, one of the two homes did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions.
- Two (50%) of the four foster homes visited were not maintained in compliance with the County contract. The child's mattress cover and sheets were stained and dirty in one home and the foster parent smoked cigarettes in the other home. The County contract requires that children not be subjected to second-hand smoke.
- Two (50%) of the four foster homes visited did not have an emergency contact list readily available as required. In addition, one of these two homes did not have a written disaster plan as required.
- One (25%) of the four foster homes visited did not conduct disaster drills with the children at least every six months.
- One (25%) of the four foster homes visited had an adult relative living in the home who did not pass their criminal clearance. Hudson Lyndsey requested an exception from the State's Community Care Licensing. However, the exception was still pending at the conclusion of our review.
- One (20%) of the five foster parents reviewed did not obtain a pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test within required timeframes. The exams were conducted four years after the foster parent's initial certification. CDSS Title

22 regulations require that pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis tests be conducted not more than one year prior to or seven days after certification.

Needs and Services Plans and Termination Reports

- Three (75%) of the four NSPs reviewed were not sent to the DCFS social workers for approval as required. Our prior review also noted that Hudson Lyndsey did not always ensure that NSPs were sent to the DCFS social workers for approval.
- Two (50%) of the four NSPs reviewed did not indicate the children's length of placement as required.
- Three (75%) of the four NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not time limited and measurable. In addition, two of the four NSPs reviewed contained goals that were not specific.
- Three (75%) of the four NSPs reviewed did not include a discussion on modification of services or the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the children's return to home, placement in another facility, or move to independent living as required.
- Two (50%) of the four NSPs reviewed did not contain documentation that the DCFS social workers were updated monthly regarding the children's progress.
- Two (67%) of the three Termination Reports reviewed did not contain a closing summary of the Agency's records related to placement.

Children's Case Files

- One (25%) of the four case files reviewed did not contain a signed copy of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Legal Rights of Teens or children's personal rights as required.
- One (25%) of the four children's annual medical examination was approximately three months past due at the time of our review. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided documentation that the examination was conducted.

Recommendations

Hudson Lyndsey 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 knives, 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. **Children are not subjected to second-hand smoke.**
5. **Foster parents have written disaster plans and posted emergency contact lists.**
6. **Foster parents conduct disaster drills with children upon placement and at least every six months thereafter.**
7. **All adults that reside in or frequently visit the foster home do not have criminal records.**
8. **Pre-certification health screenings and tuberculosis tests are conducted within the required timeframes.**
9. **NSPs are sent to the DCFS social workers for approval as required, indicate the length of placement, and contain goals that are specific, measurable and time limited.**
10. **NSPs include a discussion of the need for modification of services and the Agency's recommendation regarding the feasibility of the child's return to home, placement in another facility, or a move to independent living.**
11. **DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.**
12. **Termination Reports include a closing summary of the Agency's records related to placement.**
13. **Children's case files contain signed copies of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Legal Rights of Teens and children's personal rights.**
14. **Children's medical examinations are conducted within the required timeframes.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants received the services that Hudson Lyndsey billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed two children and four foster parents in four Hudson Lyndsey certified foster homes to confirm the services Hudson Lyndsey billed to DCFS. We also observed two toddlers who were too young to interview.

Results

The foster children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations. In addition, the two toddlers we observed seemed well cared for and happy.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Hudson Lyndsey 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 Hudson Lyndsey's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social worker and administrator.

Results

Hudson Lyndsey's three part-time contracted social workers carried an average caseload of ten cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised three social workers. However, Hudson Lyndsey's three part-time contracted social workers did not sign a written declaration indicating that the social worker's combined caseload at all agencies worked would not exceed 15 placed children as required by the County contract.

Recommendation

15. Hudson Lyndsey management ensure that all part-time contracted social workers sign written declarations indicating that their combined caseload at all agencies worked will not exceed 15 placed children.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Hudson Lyndsey 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 the Agency's Administrator and reviewed the social worker's personnel files for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearance, and ongoing training.

Results

Hudson Lyndsey's Administrator, supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Hudson Lyndsey conducted the required hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

None.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the Auditor-Controller's prior monitoring review.

Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2006-07 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on November 27, 2007.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained 15 outstanding recommendations. Hudson Lyndsey fully implemented eleven of the recommendations and partially implemented one of the recommendations. As indicated earlier, the findings relating to recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 9 contained in this report were also noted during the prior monitoring review.

Recommendation

- 16. Hudson Lyndsey management implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2007-08 monitoring report.**



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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March 29, 2010

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head *E.A.H. by CR*
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
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Fifth District

DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF HUDSON LYNDSLEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

The Auditor Controller's Contract Review of Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency was conducted in April/May 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's March 10, 2010 final draft report of the contract compliance review on March 10, 2010. The DCFS monitor reviewed the report on March 10, 2010.

The A-C's review noted that several homes were not maintained in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Two homes did not adequately secure knives, detergents and cleaning solutions. The child's mattress cover and sheets were stained and dirty in one home and the foster parent smoked cigarettes in the other home. Two homes did not have an emergency contact list/written disaster plan readily available. One home did not conduct disaster drills with the children at least every six months. One foster parent's pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test were not obtained within the required timeframes. An adult relative living in one home did not pass her criminal clearance. The FFA requested an exception from the State's Community Care Licensing for this adult, but the result was not in the file at the conclusion of the A-C review. One reviewed child's file did not contain a signed copy of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights. One sampled child's annual medical examination was not conducted within the required timeframe. Additionally, several Needs and Services Plans/Quarterly Reports (NSPs) and termination reports were found deficient.

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
HUDSON LYNDSEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
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As a result of ongoing program and fiscal concerns, DCFS placed Hudson Lyndsey on Do Not Use status on December 1, 2009 and their contract with the County has not been renewed. All the children placed at Hudson Lyndsey FFA were transferred to other Foster Family Agencies, therefore a follow-up is no longer necessary.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:CC:EK

c: Brian Mahan, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS