COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

March 1, 2006

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **HANNAH'S CHILDRENS HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Hannah's Childrens Homes Foster Family Agency (Hannah's or Agency), a foster family agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Hannah's, 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.

Hannah's is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Hannah's Los Angeles County offices are in Commerce and Palmdale and they oversee a total of 64 certified foster homes in which 117 DCFS children were placed. Hannah's is located in the First and Fifth Districts.

DCFS pays Hannah's 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, Hannah's receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child.

Out of these amounts, Hannah's pays the foster parents between $624 and $790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid Hannah's approximately $3,800,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Hannah's was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Hannah's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Hannah's received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Hannah's staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes.

Results of Review

Generally, Hannah's provided the services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Hannah's met their expectations and the children stated they enjoyed living with their foster parents. Hannah's maintained the appropriate staffing levels and case loads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Hannah's needs to ensure that the children's Needs and Services Plans contain short and long-term goals that are specific, measurable and time-limited and that the children's social workers participate in the development of the Plans. Hannah's also needs to ensure that the foster parents offer the children age appropriate organized activities as described in Hannah's program statement.

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

Review of Report

On December 15, 2005, we discussed our report with Hannah's who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Hannah's management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Hannah's 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: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Kimberly Berry, Director, Hannah's Childrens Homes Foster Family Agency
Connie Franks, Director, Hannah's Childrens Homes Foster Family Agency
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
HANNAH'S CHILDRENS HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Hannah's Childrens Homes Foster Family Agency (Hannah's or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited seven of Hannah's 64 Los Angeles County certified foster homes and interviewed seven of the 10 foster parents and the six of the 16 foster children placed in the seven homes. We also reviewed the documentation in their case files for the 10 foster parents and 16 children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Generally, Hannah's provided the services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Hannah's met their expectations and the children stated they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

The Agency needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure that the foster homes are complying with all the provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. In addition, the Agency needs to ensure that required reports contain all information specified in the County contract and Title 22 regulations. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitations

- For one (14%) of seven homes visited, a potentially unsafe condition was noted. A refrigerator was placed outside in the backyard and was powered using an extension cord connected to an electrical outlet from inside the house. Subsequent to our review, the home corrected the unsafe condition by removing the refrigerator.

Children's Records

- Five (31%) of 16 children in two foster homes interviewed were not offered an opportunity to participate in age appropriate organized activities, such as community organizations/classes, drama, team sports or other extracurricular activities as

required by the County contract. The children indicated that their activities consisted of watching television, listening to music, walking around the neighborhood or visiting the foster parents' relatives. Hannah's program statement stated that the foster parents are expected to provide each placed child with an age appropriate rich agenda of planned activities.

Needs and Services Plans

- The Needs and Services Plans for two (67%) of three children whose case plans included emancipation did not discuss emancipation services as required by the County contract.

- Fourteen (88%) of 16 Needs and Services Plans did not contain the children's social workers' written approvals as required by the County contract. The 14 Needs and Services Plans also did not identify the children's service needs or the Agency's recommendation regarding future plans for the children as required by the County contract. In addition, five (31 %) of the 16 Needs and Services Plans did not contain the children's short and long-term goals that were specific, measurable or time limited.

Reporting Requirements

- The Quarterly Reports for nine (56%) of 16 children did not include a reassessment of the children's adjustment to the foster home, progress towards short and long-term goals, and a reassessment of unmet needs and efforts to meet those needs.

- The Termination Reports for 29 (71%) of 41 children whose placement ended during October and November 2004 did not contain a complete closing summaries of the Contractor's records relating to the children as required by the County contract.

Hannah's needs to ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure the foster homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 regulations. Hannah's also needs to ensure that foster parents provide age appropriate organized activities and that all children eligible for emancipation preparation services receive those services. In addition, Hannah's needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans, Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports are completed in accordance with the County contract and that the children's social workers participate in the development and modification of the children's Needs and Services Plans.

Recommendations

Hannah's management:

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

2. **Ensure that foster parents offer children age appropriate organized activities as described in their program statement.**

3. **Ensure that staff obtain from the children's DCFS social workers written approvals of the Needs and Services Plans prior to implementing the plans.**

4. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans, Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports contain all information required by the County contract and Title 22.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services for which Hannah's billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed six children placed in seven certified foster homes and seven foster parents to confirm the services Hannah's billed to DCFS.

Results

The program participants interviewed stated that the services they received from Hannah's met their expectations and the Agency's social workers were supportive and visited them regularly.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Hannah's social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 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 Hannah's supervising social worker and social workers. We also reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records.

Results

Hannah's 14 social workers maintained an average of 10 cases and three supervising social workers supervised an average of five social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed Hannah's supervising social worker and social workers. We also reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Hannah's program director, supervisors and social workers possess the required education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Hannah's completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract. However, Hannah's did not complete current performance evaluations for the administrators of the Palmdale and Commerce offices. The administrators had not received performance evaluations for over three years. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require the Agency to conduct performance evaluations. Subsequent to our review, the Agency updated the administrator's performance evaluations.

Recommendation

5. **Hannah's management ensure that staff receive performance evaluations.**

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Date: 12/9/2005

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich,
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
J. Tyler McCauley, Auditor-Controller

CC: Connie Franks, Executive Director
Kimberly Berry, Executive Director
Brian Henricks, Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division

From: Joseph Huley
Quality Assurance

RE: Response to Hannah's Childrens Homes Foster Family Agency Contract Review

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Results of Review

Generally, Hannah's provided the services required in the County Contract. The foster parents stated the services they received from Hannah's met their expectations and the children stated they enjoyed living with the foster parents

FOSTER HOME VISITATIONS:

Findings

1.) One of seven homes visited, a potentially unsafe condition was noted. A refrigerator was placed outside the backyard and was powered using an extension cord connected to an electrical outlet from inside the house.

Recommendation

Hannah's Childrens Homes' management to:

1.) Ensure that staffs adequately monitor foster homes to ensure foster homes comply with the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.

Response

1.) All Foster Care Social Works staffs are required to make a general home inspection at least once a month.
2.) Home Inspection Monitors are required to conduct a thorough home inspection quarterly.

3.) All staffs will be reminded to ensure all foster homes are safe and that the meet all requirements of the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.

4.) Administer corrective action plans to foster parents who are not in compliance with the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.

NEEDS AND SERVICE PLANS:

Findings

2.) Five of sixteen Needs & Services Plans did not contain the children's short and long-term goals that were specific. measurable and time limited.

3.) Fourteen Needs & Services Plans did not identify the children's service needs or DCFS-CSW recommendation regarding future plans for children.

4.) Fourteen Needs & Services Plans did not contain DCFS-CSW written approval.

5.) Needs & Services Plans for two of three children whose case plans included emancipation did not discuss emancipation services.

Recommendations

Hannah's Childrens Homes' management to ensure:

1.) Needs & Services Plans contain all information required by the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.
2.) All Needs & Services Plans contain DCFS-CSW written approval prior to implementing the plan.

Response

1.) Hannah's Childrens Home will provided training to instruct Social Work staff to incorporate all the above stated recommendations into Needs & Services Plans.

2.) Foster Care Social Worker Supervisors will review all Needs & Services Plans to ensure they meet County contract requirements.

3.) Foster Care Social Worker Supervisors will audit files to ensure every effort has been made to secure DCFS-CSW signature.

QUARTERLY REPORTS:

Findings

6.) Quarterly Reports for nine of sixteen children did not have a reassessment of the child's adjustment to the foster home, progress toward short and long-term goals and a reassessment of unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs.

Recommendations

Hannah's Children Homes' management to ensure:

1.) All quarterly reports contain all information required by the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.

Response

1.) Hannah's Childrens Home will provided training to instruct Social Work staff to incorporate the above stated recommendation into Quarterly Reports.

2.) Foster Care Social Worker Supervisors will review all Quarterly Reports to ensure they meet County Contract and Title 22 requirements.

TERMINATION REPORTS:

Findings

7.) Termination Reports for twenty-nine of forty-one children whose placement ended during October and November 2004 did not contain a complete closing summary of the Contractor's records relating to the children as required by the County Contract.

Recommendations

Hannah's Childrens Homes' management to ensure:

1.) All Termination Reports contain all information required by the County Contract and Title 22 Regulations.

Response

1.) Comprehensive Termination Reports have already been instituted.

2.) Foster Care Social Worker Supervisors will continue to monitor Termination Reports to ensure they are consistant with the stated recommendation.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND USE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Findings

8.) Five of sixteen children interviewed were not offered an opportunity to participate in age appropriate organized activities such as community organizations/classes, drama, team sports or other extracurricular activities as required by County Contract

Recommendations

Hannah's Childrens Homes' Management to ensure:

1.) Foster Parents offer children age appropriate organized activities as described in their program statement

Response

1.) Certified Foster Parents will be trained on locating and utilization age appropriate activities which are consistent with the goals of Hannah's program statement.

2.) Hannah's Childrens Homes will develop an activity resource list to assist Certified Foster Parents in providing age appropriate individual and group activities.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Findings:

9.) Hannah's fourteen Social Workers maintained an average of ten cases and three Supervising Social Workers supervised an average of five Social Workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Findings:

10.) Hannah's Program Director, Supervisor and Social Workers possess the required education and work experience required by County Contract and Title 22 regulations. Additionally Hannah's completed hiring clearances for staff assign to the County Contract. However administrators had not received performance evaluations for over three years.

Recommendations

Hannah's Children Homes' Management to ensure:

1.) Staff receives performance evaluations.

Response

1.) Human Resources office will track Performance Evaluations due dates utilizing Windows XP E-2000 human resources program.

2.) Human Resources office will provide 30 day notices prior to the due date of Performance Evaluations.

3.) Human Resources office will provide late notices with copies to Executive Management for any Performance Evaluation 30 days late.

We appreciate to assistance and insight your agency has provided in aiding us in meeting the needs of our mutual clients. If you have any questions please call me a (714) 516-1077.

Respectfully,

Joseph Huley,
Quality Assurance

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