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October 10, 2007

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **DAVID AND MARGARET FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICE PROVIDER**

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

Background

DCFS contracts with David and Margaret, 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.

David and Margaret 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 25 certified foster homes in which 31 DCFS children were placed. David and Margaret is located in the Fifth District.

DCFS pays David and Margaret 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, David and Margaret receives 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. David and Margaret was paid approximately $620,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

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

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from David and Margaret generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, the three homes we visited were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 safety regulations. David and Margaret also ensured that their social worker caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

David and Margaret did not always ensure that children's Needs and Services Plans' (NSPs) contained goals that included all of the elements required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example, none of the children's goals in all five NSPs were time-limited or measurable as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, four of the five NSPs did not contain the signature of the children's DCFS social workers indicating their approval of the NSPs.

David and Margaret also did not always ensure that children taking psychotropic medications had current court authorizations for the administration of the medications as required by the County contract.

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

Review of Report

On September 12, 2007, we discussed our report with David and Margaret who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, David and Margaret's management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank David and Margaret 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: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Charles Rich, Executive Director, The David & Margaret FFA
Deena Robertson, Director, David & Margaret FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
DAVID AND MARGARET FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether David and Margaret Foster Family Agency (David and Margaret or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited three of the 25 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that David and Margaret billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in March and April 2007 and interviewed three of the seven foster parents and four of the ten children placed in the three homes. We also reviewed the case files for the seven foster parents and five children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

David and Margaret needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) address all of the elements required by the County contract and that the NSPs contain signatures from the children's DCFS social workers indicating the social workers' approval of the NSPs. The Agency also needs to ensure that children taking psychotropic medication have current court authorizations for the administration of the medication. In addition, David and Margaret also needs to ensure that foster parent files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

NSPs and Quarterly Reports

- None of the five NSPs reviewed contained goals that were time-limited and measurable as required.

- Two (40%) of the five NSPs reviewed did not address the children's ability to manage money as required.

- Four (80%) of the five NSPs reviewed did not contain the signatures from the children's DCFS social workers indicating the social workers' approval of the NSPs as required. David and Margaret sent the four NSPs to the DCFS social workers. However, the Agency did not follow-up when the NSPs were not returned.

- Two (40%) of the five Quarterly Reports reviewed did not contain Emancipation Preparation Contracts for the children as required by the County contract.

- None of the five Quarterly Reports reviewed included a reassessment of the children's unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs as required by the County contract.

Medical Services

- Three (38%) of eight children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication as required by the County contract.

Foster Home Certification

- Two (29%) of seven foster parents' certification files did not contain proof of current automobile insurance. Prior to the conclusion of the review the Agency received proof of current automobile insurance from the two foster parents.

Recommendations

David and Margaret management:

1. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all of the information required by the County contract.**

2. **Ensure that all children who take psychotropic medication have current court authorizations for the administration of the medication as required by the County contract.**

3. **Ensure that foster parents' certification files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations and that proof of current automobile insurance is maintained for foster parents.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants received the services that David and Margaret billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed four children placed in three David and Margaret certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services David and Margaret billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether David and Margaret's social workers' case loads 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 David and Margaret's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Overall, David and Margaret's social workers carried an average caseload of eleven cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

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

Results

David and Margaret's director, supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency conducted required hiring clearances and provided annual 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 recommendations from Fiscal Year 2004-05 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on November 16, 2004.

Results

Our prior report contained one recommendation. David and Margaret implemented the recommendation.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

September 20, 2007

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

J Tyler McCauley, Auditor Controller

From: David and Margaret Foster Family Agency
Deena Robertson, Program Manager
909-593-0089 ext. 3214

Re: David and Margaret Foster Family Agency 2007 Contract Review

Recommendations and Corrective Action Plan

Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and quarterly reports contain all of the information required by the county contract and that the Plans contain the signature of the DCFS social worker indicating the social workers' approval of the Plans.

David and Margaret FFA staff have completed the initial training of the new DCFS quarterly report and needs and assessment template. Within the next month our social work staff will be trained in use of the new template. Completing the template will ensure that the emancipation contract and reassessment of the children's unmet needs and efforts to meet those needs have been met. The new template will also ensure that the goals will be time limited, measurable and address the children's ability to manage money.

We continue to experience the challenge of getting DCFS workers signature indicating their approval of the minor's plans. We send them the form to sign as well as follow up with a call regarding the need of their signature. We now understand that the county auditor's office states that we should make three documented attempts to contact the worker regarding their signature of the plan. David and Margaret Staff will document three attempts regarding obtaining the signature of the worker.

Ensure that all children who take psychotropic medication have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications as required by the County Contract.

All three minors were being treated by a psychiatrist who had ordered labs on two of the children and would not re-submit the authorizations until we received the labs. There was a problem with the medical cards on two of the clients. Currently all of the minors have current court authorizations for medications. David and Margaret Staff will ensure that the current psychotropic authorizations are submitted and documented in the client file.

Ensure that foster parent's certification files contain all of the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations and that proof of current automobile insurance is maintained for the foster parents.

David and Margaret had documented in file numerous requests for the current insurance from the two foster parents. David and Margaret Staff will continue to ensure that the foster parents' certification files contain all the information required by the County Contract and Title XXII regulations.

Respectfully submitted by:

Deena Robertson
Program Manager
David and Margaret FFA

DR/dr