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January 11, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: for Cynthia McCoy Miller
Philip L. Browning
Director

FRED JEFFERSON MEMORIAL HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Fred Jefferson Memorial Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2015. The FFA has three licensed offices located in the Second Supervisorial District and in the Counties of Riverside and San Bernardino. The offices provide services to County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children and youth. According to the FFA's program statement, its stated mission is, "to maintain minors placed in our homes within their existing support system. In doing so, we maintain the minors existing attachments that they are familiar and comfortable with. We maintain attachments to birth parents when possible and when appropriate. When birth parents are not available our goal then becomes centered on developing and maintaining suitable placements. All children must be attached to a parent that is loving, nurturing and consistently there for them. Without appropriate relationships with adults that are consistent, minors are unable to develop appropriately."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in 6 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Placement Stability, Visitation, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus areas of Permanency, Engagement and Teamwork.

The FFA provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In July 2015, OHCMD quality assurance reviewer met with the FFA to discuss results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Permanency, Engagement and Teamwork.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213)351-5530.

PLB:EM:KR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Cecelia Jefferson-Freeman, Executive Officer, Fred Jefferson Memorial Homes FFA
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

FRED JEFFERSON MEMORIAL HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Fred Jefferson Memorial Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the reviewer focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the reviewer focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90 day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, two Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs); three Certified Foster Parents (CFPs), three FFA social workers, and one FFA administrator.

At the time of the QAR, the placed children's average number of placements was 6, their overall average length of placement was 11 months and their average age was 15. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the 2014-2015 contract compliance review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA Staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA ensures that the child is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6	**Optimal Safety Status** - The focus children are optimally and consistently avoiding behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or the community and is free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or intimidation in placement.
Permanency - The degree to which the child is living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the child reaches adulthood, or the child is in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the child, the FFA staff, caregivers and CSW, supports the plan.	5	4	**Minimal to Fair Status** - The focus children have minimally acceptable to fair permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the child, FFA staff, caregivers, caseworker, and team members expect will endure until the child reaches maturity.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA ensures that the child's daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions and known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruption	5	5	**Good Stability** - The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 12 months with none in the past six months. Any known risks are now well-controlled.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff support important connections being maintained through appropriate visitation.	5	5	**Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections** - Generally effective family connections are being at least minimally maintained for most significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff working with the child, biological family, extended family and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to focus on the child strengths and needs.	5	4	**Minimal Engagement Efforts** - To a minimally adequate degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSW, certified foster parent and the child feel heard and respected.
Service Needs - the degree to which the FFA staff involved with the child, work toward ensuring the child's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the child's unique needs.	5	5	**Good Supports & Services** - A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the case plan. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes. A usually dependable combination of informal and formal supports and services is available, appropriate, used, and seen as generally satisfactory.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff involved with the child and family understand the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and underlying issues and services are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5	**Good Assessment and Understanding** - The focus children are functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs, and preferences is frequently updated. Present strengths, risks, and underlying needs requiring intervention or supports are substantially recognized and well understood. Necessary conditions for improved functioning and increased overall well being are generally understood and used to select promising change strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the child and family, have formed a working team that meets, talks, and makes plans together.	5	4	**Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork.** The team contains some of the important supporters and decision makers in the children life, including informal supports. The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks, and/or plans together; at least one face-to-face team meeting has been held to develop plans.
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree, to which the FFA staff who is involved with the child and family is carefully tracking the progress that the child is making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5	**Good Tracking and Adjustment Process** - Intervention strategies, supports, and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking, and communication of child status and service results to the team are occurring. Generally successful adaptations are based on a basic knowledge of what things are working and not working for the focus children.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Safety (6 Optimal Safety Status)

Safety Overview: The FFA's Certified Foster Homes (CFHs) provided optimal safety status. The FFA's social workers ensure that children feel safe in placement by providing regular home visits where they are able to observe the child in the home environment and speak with the placed children and CFPs separately. The CFPs are provided with training prior to certification and offered training throughout the year to address potential safety issues and how to best handle situations if they were to arise.

The FFA had seven Special Incident Reports (SIRs) submitted via the I-Track database during the last 30 days. The SIRs included the following incident types: suicidal ideation; runaway; police involvement; medical hospitalization; injury and other. None of the focus children were involved in these SIRs. The FFA followed the SIR protocol and procedures, all SIRs were reported timely to all

appropriate parties within the 30 day review period. According to the Out-of-Home-Care Investigation Section, the FFA had no open investigations during the past 30 days.

The DCFS CSWs reported that they had no safety concerns regarding the FFA's CFHs. The DCFS CSWs and the FFA social workers reported that the focus children have a safe living situation with reliable caregivers who protect them. All of the focus children were free from harm in their home environment and daily settings.

All three focus children reported that the CFHs are a safe place to live. The focus children reported that their CFPs make them feel safe in their respective CFHs.

Placement Stability (5 Good Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The FFA is providing substantial stability for the focus children and there have been no recent disruptions. The FFA provides the CFPs with training and ensures that the appropriate resources are in place to help stabilize the placement. To ensure that placed children are not moved from home to home, the FFA encourages the CFPs to work with the children, even when they exhibit challenging behaviors.

All three of the focus children reported feeling comfortable in their placement and felt that all their needs were being met. Each of the focus children reported sharing positive and supportive relationships with their CFPs. The two DCFS CSWs indicated that the FFA is provided with information about the child at the time of placement and that meetings would be scheduled with the CFPs, child and FFA social worker to address the placement, if necessary. The focus children are stable in their placements and there has not been a need for any intervention. The DCFS CSW for the third focus child reported that she is very comfortable in her placement and has established a positive relationship with her foster mother.

Visitation (5 Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections)

Visitation Overview: The FFA is providing generally effective family connections for the focus children. The FFA staff obtains information from the DCFS CSWs on visitation orders of the court for the focus children. Each of the CFPs encourages focus children to maintain contact with relatives when visitation is not possible.

The first focus child has unmonitored visitation with her mother and siblings. The focus child visits with her mother once a week at a public place. However, due to some of her siblings being placed approximately 100 miles away, sibling visits have not been occurring as the FFA and the DCFS CSW are unable to provide transportation. The CFP is unable to transport due to working full-time and having other placed children in the home. The focus child and one of her siblings, who also reside in the home, use public transportation to meet their mother for visits at the train station.

Both the second and third focus children reported not having any visits with family members. The second focus child does not want to visit with her mother and the third focus child is so involved with Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) that she has limited time for visits, as much of her time is spent training with ROTC after school and on the weekends. All three of the CFPs encourage the focus children to maintain contact with their family members by phone, when visitation is not possible.

What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)

Permanency (4 Minimal to Fair Status)

Permanency Overview: The FFA is providing fair permanence. All of the focus children live in family settings where the key people believe that the relationship will endure until the focus children reach maturity. The permanency goals are adequately supported by the FFA.

The first focus child is receiving family reunification services, but a concurrent plan has not been identified in the event that reunification is unsuccessful. The focus child was unaware of what her permanent plan was, or how the FFA was supporting her toward reaching the permanency goal. The FFA social worker reported communication with the DCFS CSW regarding permanency goals and referring the child to therapy to address reunification plans.

The permanent plan for the remaining two focus children is Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (PPLA). The second focus child and her foster mother have a close relationship but neither is interested in pursuing legal permanence. The foster mother has stated that the focus child may remain with her until she emancipates. The FFA social worker reported that there has not been any discussion about a more permanent plan. Although the child is Youth Development Services (YDS) eligible, the Needs and Services Plan (NSP) indicated that YDS is pending a DCFS referral.

The third focus child's permanent plan is PPLA with her certified foster mother until she emancipates. The FFA and her foster parent are supporting the child in her plans to attend the military. The NSP for the focus child indicated that she has not received YDS. The FFA social worker stated that the focus child has some independent living skills including cooking and she also attends Independent City, a DCFS program, which helps teach interview skills and banking. The FFA social worker, DCFS CSW and the CFP are focused on the focus child's desire to enter into the military. It does not appear that preparations have been made toward the development of life skills to ensure that the focus child emancipates successfully. None of the key parties have identified an alternative plan for the child if in fact she does not join the military.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Service Needs (5 Good Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The FFA has a substantial array of supports and services that match intervention strategies identified in each focus child's case plan. The focus children have received or have been referred to therapeutic services, tutoring and extracurricular activities such as ROTC. The CFPs reported being able to collaborate with the FFA social workers to find appropriate resources and referrals such as therapy for the focus children.

The first focus child stated that she discusses her needs with her foster mother and that her foster mother is very responsive. The child was recently placed and has been referred for individual therapy. The child's CFP reported that communication with the DCFS CSW could be improved.

The second focus child reported feeling that the resources available to her are meeting her needs. She is participating in therapy bi-monthly and stated that she is learning coping skills from therapy, which she finds useful. She stated that when she speaks with her CFP, it makes a difference and that her CFP is very responsible and responsive.

The third focus child is succeeding academically and having no behavioral concerns. She is planning on enlisting into the military; therefore, reported not being interested in participating in any services. However, she reported that if there is anything she needs she can go to her DCFS CSW, FFA social worker or CFP. The focus child continues to learn life skills including cleaning techniques and meal preparation in her certified foster home.

The FFA services are generally helping the three focus children make progress toward their planned outcomes, such as, graduating high school, preparing for independence and processing past abuse or neglect through therapy.

Assessment & Linkages (5 Good Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: The FFA generally understood the focus children's functioning and support systems. Information necessary to understand the strengths and needs of the focus children are updated during visits to the home made by the FFA social worker.

Both of the DCFS CSWs stated that the CFPs always kept them abreast as to any updates on the focus children. All three focus children reported that their CFPs had a good understanding of what they needed and are responsive to any need that arises. The CFPs reported that the FFA social workers work with them and the focus children to ensure that they are linked to the appropriate resources. The FFA social workers appear to have ongoing communication with the focus children and their CFPs.

Tracking & Adjustment (5 Good Tracking & Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: The FFA has provided intervention strategies, supports and services that are generally responsive to changing conditions for each of the focus children. The FFA social workers utilize the quarterly NSP and contact note summaries to monitor and track services that are being provided to the focus children including monitoring and tracking of services through observation and talking with the children during home visits.

The focus children's adjustment and stability in their placement is frequently being monitored and communicated between the CFPs and FFA social worker. The FFA social worker tracks strategies, supports and services by communicating with the child and CFPs weekly. However, the DCFS CSW for the first focus child, and FFA social workers do not communicate regularly regarding the child's progress.

All three CFPs reported that the FFA social workers are very responsive and that their input is included in developing and adjusting case plan goals. According to the DCFS CSWs, progress is being communicated with the CFPs and the FFA social workers, and the FFA social workers make the adjustments.

What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)

Engagement (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Engagement Efforts)

Engagement Overview: The FFA has established rapport with the focus children and CFPs. Each of the focus children and their CFPs feel that their voices are heard. All of the focus children reported that they are able to confide in and rely on their CFPs; they feel heard and respected.

One of the CFPs reported that timely responses are not always received after calling and leaving messages for the DCFS CSW. Two of the CFPs reported having really good communication between themselves and both the DCFS CSW and FFA social worker. They stated that the FFA social worker meets the child and CFP regarding any concerns and then shares that information with the DCFS CSW.

There seems to be a disconnection in the efforts to engage the DCFS CSW by the FFA staff in decisions that are being made for the focus children. Both of the DCFS CSWs reported that there is very limited communication between the DCFS CSW and the FFA social worker and that they are not included in the development of the treatment goals for the focus children. The DCFS CSWs however reported ongoing communication between the CFPs and the children during monthly visits.

Teamwork (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The FFA has formed a fair working system with the focus children's team members. The FFA involved some of the important supporters in each of the focus children's lives. Two of the focus children reported never attending any team meetings and were not aware of who their team members are. The other focus child reported sometimes having team meetings and indicated that the members of her team include her foster mother, therapist, FFA social worker, DCFS CSW and herself.

It appears that the teaming by the FFA lacks the inclusion of the DCFS CSW and two of the focus children. The team's face-to-face meetings seem to consist of the FFA staff, the CFPs and the focus child. The two DCFS CSWs reported not being involved or invited to any team meetings where the FFA staff is present.

The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks, and or plans together. Face-to-face team meetings with all key team members present are not being held or attempted to be held to develop plans.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In December 2014, OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the findings from the 2014-2015 contract compliance review. The technical support focused on substantiated CCL complaints; conducting safety inspections; annual training for CFPs; maintaining common areas and children's bedrooms; developing comprehensive allowance logs; completing comprehensive NSPs and receiving DCFS authorization for the NSPs; referring children to YDS services, and ensuring timely dental exams.

In July 2015, the quality assurance reviewer discussed the results of the QAR and provided the FFA with technical support addressing methods to improve in the areas of Permanency, Engagement, and Teamwork. The FFA submitted the attached Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation to assist the FFA in implementing their QIP.

Fred Jefferson Memorial Homes For Boys
152 West Walnut Street Suite #150
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Phone # (310) 763-1660 Fax # (310) 763-0357

August 13, 2015

Department of Children and Family Services
Attention: Aiyana Rios
9320 Telstar Avenue, Suite 216
El Monte, CA 91731

Quality Assurance Review Fiscal Year 2014-2015

The following is in response to the quality assurance review for the fiscal year 2014-2015. Below you will find a response to the three areas needing improvement to assist enhancing the quality of care provided to our clients while in placement and improve the working relationship with Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.

Permanency
In an effort to improve the clients understanding of the different types of permanent plans for children in foster care, the Administrator will train the Agency Social Worker staff on August 27, 2015 at 5:00 pm on the differences of the permanent plans that are available to each child in placement. At this meeting a handout that was retained from the DCFS website titled, "A Guide To Permanency" will be given to each Social Worker. The Administrator will train the Social Workers on the differences of each option. This handout can also be referenced when the Social Worker discusses it with the clients placed in the certified homes as well as when the reports are being written. A copy of this handout will also be explained to the Certified Parents at their quarterly training on August 20, 2015 at 6pm. The portion of the handout that will be referenced in the meeting has been attached for your review.

Engagement
As an effort to improve the engagement between the agency Social Worker and the DCFS Social Worker the Agency Social Worker will continue to make at least one telephone call per month to discuss the client's progress while in placement. In addition to the monthly telephone call, the Agency Social Worker will contact the DCFS Social Worker fourteen days prior to completing the required reports on a quarterly basis to inform them of the necessary goals or modifications to the previous goals. As well as, inquire about any goal suggestions they may see necessary to include in the report. The

request for the DCFS Social Worker to participate in the development of the goals will be done via telephone or email. A copy of the email will be placed in the client's file or a telephone contact will be completed by the Agency social Worker. All Agency Social Workers will be informed of this new requirement at the meeting to be held on August 27, 2015. Each Agency Social Worker will be expected to begin this process immediately.

Teamwork

In an effort to improve the teamwork between the Agency and DCFS the Agency Social Worker will request to meet with at minimum the DCFS Social Worker, Certified Parent and the Child together at a face to face meeting within the first thirty days of placement and every ninety days thereafter. If there are issues or barriers that is keeping the child from progressing while in placement the number of face to face meetings will be increased as needed. Regardless, of issues and/or barriers there will be meetings arranged to ensure the Agency and DCFS are working toward the same goals with each placed child. On October 15, 2015 the Agency Social Worker will be informed of this new requirement. The administrator will suggest that the request for these meetings be made via email in order to place a copy of the request in the client's file at the FFA.

The sign in sheets for each meeting where this information is being discussed will be sent to the assigned reviewer no later than October 16, 2015 for your review. If further information is needed please feel free to contact me at the above mentioned number at extension 118.

Respectfully submitted,

Niquelle Lewis

Niquelle Lewis, MA
Administrator