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July 21, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

WEST COVINA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DBA HOMES OF HOPE 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 the West Covina Foster Family Agency dba Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in February 2016. The FFA has one office located in the First Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to ensure children are provided with a continuity of care, nurturance and services that will meet their needs and those of their families as prescribed by their Needs and Services Plans. A secondary goal is the achievement of legal permanency for children. When family reunification has been determined by the court and the placing agency is no longer a viable option and a child's case goal has been determined to be the achievement of legal permanency through adoption or guardianship, the Agency will make every effort to achieve these goals."

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 all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In April 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer discussed the results of the QAR with the FFA. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas; therefore, the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

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

PLB:KR
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Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
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WEST COVINA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DBA HOMES OF HOPE
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the West Covina Foster Family Agency dba Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in February 2016. 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 QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR 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 FFA staff members, three certified foster parents and three service providers.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 91 DCFS placed children in 33 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was three, their overall average length of placement was 17 months and their average age was 13. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 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 focus 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 staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	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 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are 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 the focus children's status is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in April 2015 and the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the QAR. In April 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as the FFA continues to score at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5

In the areas of Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability and Visitation, the FFA provides a good quality of services and stability to the focus children. The FFA continues to provide a safe living environment for each of the focus children. The FFA administrator utilizes a Tracking Log to monitor special incidents and the FFA Child Abuse Referral Investigation Log to ensure that all placed children are living in a safe environment. To further enhance the safety of the placed children in their foster homes, the FFA utilizes solution focused training to certified foster parents that have more than one injury related incident in their homes. Certified foster parents who received multiple child abuse referrals are provided with additional training to assist them in understanding child abuse laws. The FFA staff also works with the DCFS CSWs to develop and implement a safety plan if the placed children make suicide attempts or threaten to hurt others. All of the focus children reported that they felt safe because their certified foster parents are always home and they receive adequate supervision

and support from their certified foster parents. The DCFS CSWs reported that they have no safety concerns about the FFA.

The FFA Social Workers collaborate with the key team members via face-to-face meetings, telephone or e-mail to assist the placed children to achieve legal permanence. Two of the focus children have Family Reunification services; Adoption is the permanency plan for the third focus child. The FFA staff and certified foster parents understand and fully support the focus children's permanency goals and make efforts to assist them in achieving permanency, such as ensuring that the focus children are visiting with their family members/NREFMs. The FFA prepares the placed children for independence by providing independent living skills training. Training topics include cooking, laundry and personal hygiene maintenance. The FFA maintains placement stability by conducting weekly face-to-face visits with the focus children, providing problem solving skills, training certified foster parents, and speaking with the focus children privately. The FFA Social Workers reported that they discuss the focus children's status with the certified foster parents on a weekly basis to work through any problems and to avoid placement disruption. The focus children reported that their placements are meeting their needs. They feel comfortable in their current placement because the food and language are similar to their culture.

The FFA provides transportation and will monitor visits for the focus children. Visitation is documented in the FFA Visitation Log and monitored by the FFA administrator or FFA Social Worker to ensure all placed children maintain connected with their family members/NREFMs. If a visit is missed or cancelled, the FFA will immediately work with all related parties to reschedule the visit.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	5	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA makes good efforts in engaging the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made for them. The FFA Social Workers initiate the contact with all parties by introducing themselves to DCFS CSWs, certified foster parents and the focus children at the time of the placement. The FFA Social Workers always maintain ongoing communication via e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face visitation to build a working partnership with the placed children and their DCFS CSWs. The DCFS CSWs reported that they communicate with the FFA Social Workers and certified foster parents to discuss the needs and services of the placed children on a regular basis. The focus children reported

that the FFA Social Workers, certified foster parents, and DCFS CSWs communicate with each other via emails, telephone contact and during the face-to-face visits at the certified foster parents' homes.

The FFA's provision of a good and substantial array of services and supports match intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The focus children reported that they complete their homework every day and that their grades have slightly improved because of the tutoring services they are provided. The FFA Social Workers speak with the focus children and certified foster parents during the weekly home visits to ensure that services for the focus children are in place and that the focus children are making progress toward their Needs and Services Plan goals. The FFA assesses the focus children's needs and provides appropriate services to meet their needs and function effectively in their daily settings.

The FFA involves most of the key team members in the focus children's lives. The team consists of the DCFS CSW, FFA Social Worker, certified foster parents, family members/NREFMs, the focus children, and their therapist. Certified foster parents stated that they attended the focus children's school conferences and they also met with their teachers to work together to assist the focus children in achieving their educational goals. The focus children reported that they are included in the team meetings and are pleased that their teams are working together to assist them in achieving their educational and case plan goals. The FFA's intervention strategies and services provided are generally responsive to the focus children's needs. The FFA continues to review and evaluate the focus children's status on a weekly basis or more frequently, if needed. The FFA Social Workers utilize the FFA weekly certified foster home visitation checklists to track the focus children's behaviors and well-being in the certified foster homes. The FFA Social Workers visit the focus children at school and meet with their school teachers or school counselors to track their academic achievement in school. The FFA Social Workers meet weekly with the certified foster parents, focus children and other key team members to discuss the focus children's progress. If no progress is observed, they will determine if the modification of treatment goals is necessary. For example, one focus child was doing poorly academically in school. The FFA Social Worker discussed the concern with the certified foster parent and in-home weekly tutoring was arranged to ensure that homework assignments were completed and submitted to school on a timely basis. Due to the FFA's intervention, the focus child was able to improve his grades.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In May 2015, OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, Facility and Environment, and Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure adherence to Title 22 Regulations; maintenance of common areas and children's bedrooms; and that placed children are treated with respect and dignity.

In April 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas; therefore a QIP was not required. However, the OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation as needed.