COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
JAMES L. SCHNEIDERMAN
JUDI E. THOMAS

June 20, 2011

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

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **THE VILLAGE FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTRACT SERVICE PROVIDER – CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

We have completed a review of The Village Family Services Foster Family Agency (Village or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contract service provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether Village provided the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract.

DCFS contracts with Village, a private, non-profit, community-based organization, to recruit, train and certify foster parents to supervise children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child in a foster home, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from foster care. Village oversees 80 certified foster homes in which 245 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Village is located in the Third Supervisorial District. DCFS paid Village approximately $4.4 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

Results of Review

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed who were too young to interview appeared well cared for and healthy. The Agency also ensured that their social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by California Department

of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations. However, we noted that Village did not always comply with all the requirements of CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract. For example:

- Two (20%) of the ten foster homes reviewed did not adequately secure detergents.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their social workers and foster parents on securing hazardous materials, and that their social workers will ensure compliance during monthly home inspections.

- One (10%) of the ten foster homes reviewed had more than two children, but was not assessed by Village to ensure the foster parents could care for more than two children.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their staff on requirements for foster homes where more than two children will be placed.

- One (5%) of the 19 foster parents did not have documentation of a federal criminal clearance. After our review, Village obtained a clearance for the foster parent.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their intake staff on obtaining required federal criminal clearances.

- Two (11%) of the 19 foster parents reviewed did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their staff on the annual continuing education training requirements, and that the Agency will implement a process to ensure the training is completed.

- Three (16%) of the 19 foster parents reviewed did not have required documentation of a current pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their staff on the pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test requirements, and that the Agency will implement a process to ensure the tests are completed.

- Seven (23%) of the 30 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed did not have specific and/or time limited goals. In addition, three (10%) of the 30 NSPs reviewed did not include required details of the children's progress on their goals.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train staff on NSPs, and that their Quality Assurance Department will review the NSPs.

- Four (13%) of the 30 Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include required details of the children's progress on their goals.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their staff on Quarterly Reports, and that their Quality Assurance Department will review the Quarterly Reports.

- One (7%) of 15 files we reviewed for children who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication. However, the foster parent and the child indicated the child was taking the medication and was seen monthly by the prescribing physician. After our review, the Agency obtained the court authorization.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their social workers and document their efforts to obtain court authorizations.

- One (3%) of the 30 children's files reviewed had a Special Incident Report (SIR) that was not sent to DCFS timely. The child fell and received a minor injury.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will train their staff on completing SIRs.

- One supervising social worker and two social workers did not have the required education and work experience.

  Village's attached response indicates that they will ensure all staff meet the qualifications before being hired.

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

To enable Village to begin taking action immediately, we discussed our findings and recommendations from our review with Agency management while completing our review in July 2010.

Review of Report

We again discussed our report with Village on January 21, 2011, and with DCFS. Village management's response (Attachment I) indicates the actions the Agency has taken to address the issues noted in our report. DCFS' response (Attachment II) indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

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

WLW:JLS:DC:AA

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Interim Director, DCFS
Cesar Biggeri, Chair, Board of Directors, The Village Family Services
Hugo Villa, Chief Executive Officer, The Village Family Services
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing, CDSS
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

THE VILLAGE FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2009-10

BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays The Village Family Services Foster Family Agency (Village or Agency) a monthly rate per child placement. The rate is established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Village receives between $1,430 and $1,679 per child, per month, based on the child's age, for a total of approximately $4.4 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Village was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract. We reviewed the Agency's certified foster parent files, children's case files and personnel files, and interviewed Village staff. We also visited ten certified foster homes and interviewed 13 foster parents and 20 foster children.

To enable Village to begin taking action immediately, we discussed the findings and recommendations from our review with Agency management while completing our review.

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Village provided program services in accordance with CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract.

Verification

As noted earlier, we visited ten of Village's 80 Los Angeles County certified foster homes, and interviewed 13 foster parents and 20 children placed in the homes. We also observed five toddlers who were too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for 19 foster parents and 30 foster children, and reviewed the Agency's monitoring activities.

Results

Village did not always comply with CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract requirements. Specifically:

Foster Home Visitation and Foster Parent Certification

- Two (20%) of the ten foster homes reviewed did not adequately secure detergents.

- Two (20%) of the ten foster homes reviewed were not properly maintained. Specifically, one of the foster homes reviewed had a backyard fence that was in need of repair, and another home had carpet in the dining room that was dirty and needed to be cleaned.

- One (10%) of the ten foster homes reviewed had more than two children, but was not assessed by Village to ensure the foster parents could care for more than two children.

- One (5%) of the 19 foster parents reviewed had State criminal and Child Abuse Index clearances, but did not have documentation of a federal criminal clearance. After our review, Village obtained a federal clearance for the foster parent.

- Two (11%) of the 19 foster parents reviewed did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training.

- Three (16%) of the 19 foster parents reviewed did not have documentation of a current pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- Seven (23%) of the 30 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed did not have specific and/or time-limited goals.

- Three (10%) of the 30 NSPs reviewed did not include required details of the children's progress on their goals.

- Three (10%) of the 30 NSPs reviewed did not include the planned length of the children's placements.

- Four (13%) of the 30 Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include required details of the children's progress on their goals.

Medical Services and Children's Case Files

- One (7%) of 15 case files we reviewed for children who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication. However, the foster parent and the child indicated that the child was taking the medication, and was seen monthly by the prescribing physician. After our review, the Agency obtained the court authorization.

- One (3%) of the 30 children's files reviewed had a Special Incident Report (SIR) that was not sent to DCFS timely. The child fell and received a minor injury.

Recommendations

Village management ensure:

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract.**

2. **Foster homes are safe and well-maintained in accordance with CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract.**

3. **Foster parents adequately secure detergents that could pose a safety hazard to children.**

4. **Assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed.**

5. **Foster parents obtain federal criminal clearances, and complete the pre-certification health screenings and tuberculosis tests, and annual continuing education training.**

6. **NSPs include specific and time-limited goals, details of the children's progress on their goals, and the planned length of placement.**

7. **Quarterly reports include the children's progress on their goals.**

8. **Current court authorizations are maintained for children taking psychotropic medication.**

9. **SIRs are sent to DCFS timely.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the foster parents and children received the services that Village billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed 13 foster parents and 20 children placed in ten of Village's certified foster homes to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. We also observed five toddlers who were too young to interview.

Results

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

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Verify that Village social workers' caseloads did not exceed 15 placements, and that the supervising social workers did not supervise more than six social workers as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract.

Verification

We interviewed Village's administrator and supervising social workers, and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers.

Results

Village's 18 social workers carried an average caseload of 15 cases, and the Agency's supervising social workers supervised an average of six social workers.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Village's staff had the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted required clearances before hiring staff, and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Village's administrator, and reviewed each staff member's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Village's administrator and supervisors had the required education and work experience, and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract. However, one of Village's supervising social worker and two social workers did not have the required education and work experience.

Recommendation

10. Village management ensure that staff working on the County contract have the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract.

January 25, 2011

County of Los Angeles
Department of Auditor-Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3873
Phone: (213) 974-8301
Fax: (213) 626-5427

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

Re: Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to Contract Compliance Review Draft Letter dated 1/20/2011.

The Village Family Services Foster Family Agency is in receipt of the draft report created following the contract compliance review of our agency, which was conducted by Auditor-Controller's Contract Monitoring Division for fiscal year 2009-2010. We would like to thank the Auditor-Controller's staff, especially Maricela Morfin, for her professionalism and support during the program review of our Foster Care Program.

The Village Family Services has reviewed the above referenced report and submits the following corrective action plan to address the findings. Areas of review will be explained by recommendation, number, and followed by the corrective action plan.

Recommendation #1
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

All Foster Care Social Workers and foster parents will receive training on the importance of compliance with County contract as well as Title 22 regulations. Foster Care Social Worker's will provide on-going training and support during the weekly or bi-weekly contact with foster parents to ensure compliance with County and State regulations.

Recommendation #2
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure foster homes are safe and well-maintained in accordance with the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

6736 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Suite 200 North Hollywood, CA 91606
PH: (818) 755-8786 / FAX: (818) 755-8789
Email: villagefs@thevillagefs.org

All Foster Care Social Workers and foster parents will receive training on the importance of compliance with County contract as well as Title 22 regulations specifically related to the safety and maintenance of the certified foster homes. Foster Care Social Workers will complete a monthly walk through of the home and quarterly home inspections to ensure compliance with safe grounds and appropriate maintenance of all certified foster homes. The Certified Foster Parent home who had carpeting that needed cleaning at the time of review had the carpet in the dining room shampooed immediately to address the carpeting concern in the high traffic area. Please see attached photograph as proof of correction. Also, The Certified Foster Parent who had a backyard fence that needed repair at the time of review received training and repaired the wooden fence. Please see the attached copy of the photograph and training statement as proof of correction.

Recommendation #3
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.

All Foster Care Social Workers and foster parents will receive training that reviews the adequate and safe storage of detergents, cleaning solutions and other hazardous items. Foster Care Social Workers will ensure proper storage of hazardous items through the completion of a monthly walk through of the home and quarterly home inspections. The two Certified Foster Homes reviewed that did not adequately secure detergents/cleaning solutions were provided specialized training regarding agency, CCL and DCFS regulations, policies and procedures. Training included a review of proper storage of detergents which includes maintaining all toxic materials locked at all times, safe storage of electrical appliances, and maintaining the grounds in good repair. Please see attached confirmation of training and photograph as proof of correction.

Recommendation #4
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure pre-placement assessments for homes where more than two children will be placed.

All Foster Care Social Workers and intake staff will receive training on the pre-placement requirements for certified foster homes where more than two children will be placed. Additionally, using our internal tracking system (FosterTrak), we will confirm that pre-placement assessments are completed prior to placements.

Recommendation #5
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure foster parents obtain federal criminal clearances, complete the pre-certification health screening and tuberculosis test, and annual continuing education training as required.

The Village Family Services intake staff will receive training regarding required federal criminal clearances, pre-certification health screening/ tuberculosis test and annual re-certification training. The Village Family Services is designing and implementing quality control processes to ensure both health screenings and TB tests are completed and annual continuing education training is completed. Our Quality Assurance Department will run monthly reports to monitor when the requirements are due. They will provide supervisors with reminders in the month

6736 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Suite 200 North Hollywood, CA 91606
PH: (818) 755-8786 / FAX: (818) 755-8789
Email: villagefs@thevillagefs.org

preceding the due date. Furthermore, quarterly reviews of foster parent charts will further ensur that our new process is effective.

Recommendation #6

It is recommended that TVFS management ensure Needs and Services Plans include goals that are specific and time limited, detail the children's progress on their goals and the planned lengt of placement.

The Village Family Services is taking two approaches to ensure the quality of NSPs. First, existing staff will be provided with a refresher training on the components and value of the NSP New staff will receive comphrensive training on the NSP as part of their orientation.

Secondly, our Quality Assurance Department is implementing (on 1/31/11) a new process wher they will be reviewing all NSPs. The criteria of the QA review will cover the items mentioned i recommendation #6, in addition to other criteria (e.g. ensuring all sections are complete and relevant, all required signatures are present, proof that plan was provided to all relevant parties)

Recommendation #7

It is recommended that TVFS management ensure Quarterly Reports include the children's progress on their goals.

The Village Family Services is taking two approaches to ensure the quality of Quarterly Report First, existing staff will be provided with a refresher training on the components and value of th updated progress on the quarterly reports. New staff will receive comprehensive training on the Quarterly Report as part of their orientation.

Secondly, our Quality Assurance Department is implementing (on 1/31/11) a new process wher they will be reviewing all Quarterly Reports. The criteria of the QA review will cover the items mentioned in recommendation #7, in addition to other criteria (e.g. ensuring all sections are complete and relevant).

Recommendation #8

It is recommended that TVFS management ensure children taking psychotropic medication hav a current court authorization for the medication.

The Village Family Services will provide training to Foster Care Social Workers regarding the psychotropic medication court authorization requirement and process to ensure compliance. All Foster Care Social Workers and intake staff will be provided a copy of the Psychotropic Medication Authorization Activity Log on 1/26/11 during the training to ensure appropriate documentation of efforts to obtain court authorizations. The Village Family Services Quality Assurance Department completes regular internal audits and will ensure appropriate documentation in files of children taking psychotropic medication. Compliance will be monitored during weekly supervisions between the Foster Care Supervisors and agency Social Workers.

6736 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Suite 200 North Hollywood, CA 91606
PH: (818) 755-8786 / FAX: (818) 755-8789
Email: villagefs@thevillagefs.org

Recommendation #9
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure Special Incident Reports are sent to Department of Children and Family Services in a timely manner.

All staff will receive training on the protocol for both responding to and reporting SIRs. Emphasis will be put on immediate notification of supervisor, the QA Department and immediate completion of the Special Incident Report (SIR) via internet. The completion and submission of the SIR will be an immediate priority for all involved. Copy of the SIR's will be filed in the child's chart. Additionally, a retroactive review of SIRs and their report dates will be performed by QA to identify additional training needs.

I hope that we have clearly responded to your request for our correction plan of deficiencies that were identified during the Auditor Controller's review of our agency. I have attached copies of all documents referred to in this letter. If you should have any questions and suggestions regarding this corrective action plan, please feel free to call me at 818-755-8786.

Recommendation #10
It is recommended that TVFS management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the education required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

The Village Family Services Foster Care Administration will work closely with the agency Human Resources department who will review all documents pre-employment to ensure all interviewed staff meet qualifications prior to hiring for positions to meet the needs to the Foster Care Program.

Thank you,

Lizette Solis, M.S.
Assistant Administrator
The Village Family Services

6736 Laurel Canyon Blvd. Suite 200 North Hollywood, CA 91606
PH: (818) 755-8786 / FAX: (818) 755-8789
Email: villagefs@thevillagefs.org

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020

ANTONIA JIMÉNEZ
Acting Director

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

March 25, 2011

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

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out-of-Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

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

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of The Village Foster Family Agency was conducted in July 2010. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's February 1, 2011 final draft report of the contract compliance review on February 1, 2011.

The A-C's final draft report found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The draft report notes that two of ten homes reviewed did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions. Other physical plant deficiencies noted were that one home needed to repair a back yard fence and one home had dirty carpet in the dining room. The Village submitted corrective action stating their social staff and foster parents will be trained to ensure compliance. It was also noted that one home had not been assessed to care for more than two children; that two of 19 foster parents had not completed the required annual training hours; three foster parents did not have documentation of a current required health screening and tuberculosis test, and one foster parent did not have documentation of the required FBI clearance. The Village implemented a practice to ensure training hour completed, and timely health screenings and TB tests are timely. They also requested the missing FBI clearance for the one foster parent.

The A-C's report noted Needs and Services Plans/Quarterly Report findings and one of 15 children on psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization. The Village's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) states they will implement training of their staff to address NSP/QR findings. Additionally, The Village provided the current psychotropic medication authorization for the one child during the Exit Conference.

THE VILLAGE FFA
PAGE 2

The A-C's report also noted that documentation of a non-egregious special incident in one child's case file was not reported to DCFS timely, and three social work staff did not meet required education and experience. The Village has implemented protocols to ensure timely reporting of special incidents to DCFS. Further, during the Exit Conference, The Village provided exceptions from Community Care Licensing (CCL) regarding the staff education and experience.

The Village has submitted a Corrective Action Plan to address implementation of all recommendations noted in the A-C's draft report.

The OHCMD will assess for full implementation of the A-C's recommendations after the issuance of the A-C's final report.

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

KR:EAH