County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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May 29, 2014

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

COUNSELING AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATES D.B.A. MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a review of Counseling and Research Associates d.b.a. Masada Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in November 2013. The FFA has one licensed office located in the Second Supervisorial District; one licensed office located in the Fifth Supervisorial District; and one licensed office in San Bernardino County and provides services to County of Los Angeles DCFS foster children and youth. According to the FFA's program statement, its mission is "to provide children with a stable and supportive living environment while preparing them for reunification with their biological families or placement."

At the time of the review, the FFA supervised 104 DCFS placed children in 54 certified foster homes. The placed children's average length of placement was seven months, and their average age was nine.

SUMMARY

During OHCMD's review, the interviewed children generally reported: feeling safe at the FFA; having been provided with good care and appropriate services; being comfortable in their environment and treated with respect and dignity. The certified foster parents reported they were supported by the FFA staff in their efforts to provide care, supervision and service delivery to the children placed in their homes.

The FFA was in full compliance with 6 of 11 sections of our Contract compliance review: Education and Workforce Readiness; Health and Medical Needs; Psychotropic Medication; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Discharged Children; and Personnel Records.

OHCMD noted deficiencies in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, related to Special Incident Reports (SIR) not being cross-reported to OHCMD; Community Care Licensing (CCL) citations, and not having conducted an assessment prior to placing more than two children in a certified foster home; Certified Foster Homes, related to the FFA failing to submit an inquiry to OHCMD for historical abuse/neglect information for a prospective certified foster parent prior to certification. Facility and Environment, related to a foster home's common areas and children's bedrooms not being well-maintained; Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, related to certified foster parents not being familiar with Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), and Initial NSPs not being comprehensive as they did not include all of the elements in accordance with the NSP template; and Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being, related to children not having life books or photo albums.

Attached are the details of our review.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On January 14, 2014, the DCFS OHCMD Monitor, Darío Villamarín, held an Exit Conference with the FFA representatives, Richard Coleman, Director, Leslie Oropeza, Supervisor, Héctor Martínez, Supervisor, and Sylvia Gómez, Supervisor. The FFA's representatives: agreed with the review findings and recommendations; were receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve their compliance with regulatory standards; and agreed to address the noted deficiencies in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

A copy of this compliance report has been sent to the Auditor-Controller and CCL.

The FFA provided the attached approved CAP addressing the recommendations noted in this compliance report. OHCMD will verify that these recommendations have been implemented and provide technical assistance during our next visit to the FFA in June 2014.

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

PLB:EM:KR
RDS:dv

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Acting Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Richard Coleman, Director, Masada Homes FFA
Angelica López, Acting Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing

MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW SUMMARY

130 West Victoria Avenue	8485 Tamarind Avenue	1045 Bonita Avenue
Gardena, CA 90248	Fontana, CA 92335	La Verne, CA 91750
License Number: 197806164	License Number: 336403491	License Number: 197806086

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	Findings: November 2013
I	**Licensure/Contract Requirements** (7 Elements)	
	1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation	1. Full Compliance
	2. Serious Incident Report Documentation and Cross Reporting	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Runaway Procedures in Accordance with the Contract	3. Full Compliance
	4. Are there CCL Citations/OHCMD Safety Reports	4. Improvement Needed
	5. If Applicable, FFA Ensures Complete Required Whole Foster Family Homes (WFFH) Training	5. Not Applicable
	6. FFA Pays Certified Foster Parents (CFP) WFFH Required Payments	6. Not Applicable
	7. FFA Conducts an Assessment of CFP Prior to Placement of Two (2) or More Children	7. Improvement Needed
II	**Certified Foster Homes (CFHs)** (12 Elements)	
	1. Home Study and Safety Inspection Conducted Prior to Certification	1. Full Compliance
	2. Agency's Inquiry with OHCMD for Historical Information Prior to Certification	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Timely Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Prior to Certification	3. Full Compliance
	4. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement	4. Full Compliance
	5. Health Screening & TB Test Prior to Certification	5. Full Compliance
	6. All Required Training Prior to Certification	6. Full Compliance
	7. Certificate of Approval on File/Including Capacity	7. Full Compliance
	8. Safety Inspection Completed At Least Every Six Months or Per Approved Program Statement	8. Full Compliance
	9. Completed Annual Training Hours for Re-certification and Current CPR/First-Aid/Water Safety Certificates	9. Full Compliance
	10. Current CDL/Auto Insurance/Annual Vehicle Maintenance Documentation for CFPs and Designated Drivers, if Applicable Car Seat(s)	10. Full Compliance
	11. Criminal Clearances and Health Screening/CDL/CPR/ DOJ/FBI/CACI/Auto Insurance for Other Adults in the Home	11. Full Compliance
	12. FFA Assists CFPs in Providing Transportation Needs	12. Full Compliance

III	**Facility and Environment** (7 Elements)	
	1. Exterior/Grounds Well Maintained	1. Full Compliance
	2. Common Areas/Interior Well Maintained	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Well Maintained	3. Improvement Needed
	4. Sufficient and Appropriate Educational Resources	4. Full Compliance
	5. Adequate Perishable and Non-Perishable Food	5. Full Compliance
	6. CFP Conduct Disaster Drills and Documentation Maintained	6. Full Compliance
	7. Money and Clothing Allowance Logs Maintained	7. Full Compliance
IV	**Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery** (10 Elements)	
	1. FFA Obtains or Documents Efforts to Obtain County Children's Social Worker's (CSW) Authorization to Implement NSPs	1. Full Compliance
	2. CFPs Participated in Development of NSPs	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Children Progressing Towards Meeting NSP Goals	3. Full Compliance
	4. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Initial NSP with Child's Participation	4. Improvement Needed
	5. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Updated NSPs with Child's Participation	5. Full Compliance
	6. Therapeutic Services Received	6. Full Compliance
	7. Recommended Assessments/Evaluations Implemented	7. Full Compliance
	8. County Children's Social Workers Monthly Contacts Documented in Child's Case File	8. Full Compliance
	9. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Quarterly Reports	9. Full Compliance
	10. FFA Social Workers Conduct Required Visits	10. Full Compliance
V	**Education and Workforce Readiness** (5 Elements)	
	1. Children Enrolled in School Within Three School Days	Full Compliance (ALL)
	2. Children Attend School as Required and FFA Facilitates in Meeting Children's Educational Goals	
	3. Current Children's Report Cards/Progress Reports Maintained	
	4. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased	
	5. FFA Facilitates Child's Participation in YDS or Equivalent Services and Vocational Programs	

VI	**Health and Medical Needs** (4 Elements) 1. Initial Medical Exams Conducted Timely 2. Follow-up Medical Exams Conducted Timely 3. Initial Dental Exams Conducted Timely 4. Follow-Up Dental Exams Conducted Timely	Full Compliance (ALL)
VII	**Psychotropic Medications** (2 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review	Full Compliance (ALL)
VIII	**Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being** (10 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Agency's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe in the CFP Home 3. CFPs' Efforts to Provide Nutritious Meals and Snacks 4. CFPs Treat Children with Respect and Dignity 5. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and to Receive Correspondence 6. Children Free to Attend or Not Attend Religious Services/Activities of Their Choice 7. Children's Chores Reasonable 8. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 9. Children Aware of Right to Refuse or Receive Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 10. Children Given Opportunities to Participate in Extra-Curricular Activities, Enrichment and Social Activities	Full Compliance (ALL)
IX	**Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being** (7 Elements) 1. $50 Clothing Allowance in Accordance with FFA Program Statement 2. Ongoing Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quantity and Quality 3. Children's Involvement in Selection of Their Clothing 4. Provision of Sufficient Supply of Clean Towels and Personal Care Items Meeting Ethnic Needs 5. Minimum weekly Monetary Allowances 6. Management of Allowance/Earnings 7. Encouragement/Assistance with Life Book/Photo Album	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Full Compliance 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance 7. Improvement Needed

X	**Discharged Children** (3 Elements) 1. Completed Discharge Summary 2. Attempts to Stabilize Children's Placement 3. Child Completed High School (if applicable)	Full Compliance (ALL)
XI	**Personnel Records** (9 Elements) 1. Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Signed and Submitted Timely 2. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement 3. FFA Social Workers Met Education/Experience Requirements 4. Timely Employee Health Screening/TB Clearances 5. Valid CDL and Auto Insurance 6. FFA Employees Signed Copies of FFA Policies and Procedures 7. FFA Employees Completed All Required Training and Documentation Maintained 8. FFA Social Workers Have Appropriate Caseload Ratio 9. FFA Maintained Written Declarations for Part-Time Contracted FFA Social Workers Caseloads Not Exceed Total of 15 Children	Full Compliance (ALL)

MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The following report is based on a "point in time" monitoring visit. This compliance report addresses findings noted during the November 2013 monitoring review. The purpose of this review was to assess Masada Homes Foster Family Agency's (the FFA) compliance with the County contract and State regulations and included a review of the FFA's program statement, as well as administrative internal policies and procedures. The monitoring review covered the following 11 areas:

- Licensure/Contract Requirements,
- Certified Foster Homes,
- Facility and Environment,
- Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery,
- Educational and Workforce Readiness,
- Health and Medical Needs,
- Psychotropic Medication,
- Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being,
- Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being,
- Discharged Children, and
- Personnel Records.

For purposes of this review, 12 children were selected for the sample. Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) interviewed 9 children. One child did not want to be interviewed; and 2 were reunified with their biological family. During the home visits, the children were observed to be comfortable in the certified foster homes and the certified parents were observed to be attuned to the needs of the children. OHCMD reviewed all 12 case files to assess the care and services they received. Additionally, 4 discharged children's files were reviewed to assess the FFA's compliance with permanency efforts. At the time of the review, 3 placed children were prescribed psychotropic medication. We reviewed all 3 case files to assess for timeliness of Psychotropic Medication Authorizations and to confirm the required documentation of psychiatric monitoring.

OHCMD reviewed 5 certified foster parent files and 5 staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. Interviews were conducted with 5 certified foster parents to assess the quality of care and supervision provided to the children.

CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE

OHCMD found the following five areas to be out of compliance.

Licensure/Contract Requirements

- In review of the children's case files, it was noted that three Special Incident Reports (SIRs) were not cross-reported to the OHCMD.

The first incident involved a youth who developed nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and headache while having dinner. The certified foster parents called the paramedics who instructed the certified foster parents to take the youth to the hospital for medical attention. It was determined that the youth had experienced a panic attack. The second SIR involved a youth involved in a verbal altercation with another placed youth where the aggressor held the other youth's face and used foul language. The third SIR involved the same youth (the aggressor) smoking marijuana in the bedroom with another placed youth. A child abuse referral was not generated for this SIR.

- Community Care Licensing (CCL) cited the FFA for Buildings and Grounds violations.

According to a CCL complaint report dated June 28, 2013, during a visit to a certified foster home, CCL noted that a den was added to the certified foster home without a permit and the den was used as a bedroom. The FFA submitted a Plan of Correction (POC) to CCL which, included the certified foster parents obtaining a permit. The POC was approved by CCL on July 1, 2013.

- CCL cited the FFA for a Buildings and Grounds violation.

According to the CCL report dated October 16, 2013, during a visit to a certified foster home, CCL noted that the certified foster home was in the process of being remodeled and one of the bedrooms did not have an exit window, the home did not have a heating system and the garage was being used as a bedroom. The FFA submitted a POC to CCL which, included: each bedroom will have at least one operable window or door to ensure safe, direct, emergency exit to the outside, thus, reducing certified foster home's capacity; the foster home will maintain a safe and comfortable temperature for the children; a heating system will be installed; and the FFA is to ensure that a building permit for the home is obtained. The POC was approved by CCL on November 20, 2013.

- The FFA failed to follow procedures by not conducting an assessment prior to placing more than 2 children in a certified foster home. The assessment boxes were checked, but the form did not contain a narrative indicating how the certified foster parents would meet the needs of additional children.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA representatives stated the FFA will provide SIR training to its Social Work staff once a year and that a system would be implemented to ensure that SIRs are appropriately cross-reported to OHCMD. The FFA representatives provided OHCMD with verification that the FFA Social Work staff received SIR training on January 13, 2014. Additionally, on January 13, 2014, CCL provided the FFA with Title 22 Regulations, Buildings and Grounds training. The FFA provided OHCMD with verification of the CCL training on January 14, 2014.

Recommendations

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

1. SIRs are cross-reported to all required parties timely.

2. The FFA is in full compliance with Title 22 Regulations, free of CCL's citations.

3. The FFA will conduct an assessment of certified foster parents prior to placing more that two children in a certified foster home and indicate how the certified foster parents would meet the needs of all the children placed.

Certified Foster Homes

- For 2 of the 5 certified foster parents in the sample, OHCMD found no documentation in the certified foster parents' files that the FFA submitted inquiries to OHCMD for historical abuse/neglect information prior to certification. During the review process the 2 certified foster parents' historical abuse/neglect background information was searched and there were no records that would prevent them from being placement resources.

Recommendations

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

4. OHCMD is contacted regarding historical abuse/neglect information on prospective foster parents prior to certification.

Facility and Environment

- In a certified foster home, the certified foster parents' master bathroom door was in need of repair. The children's bedrooms had unfinished ceilings. OHCMD immediately brought these issues to the attention of the FFA.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA provided OHCMD with pictures as verification that the door was replaced and the ceilings fixed. Additionally, the FFA stated they would conduct unannounced visits to its certified foster homes to ensure compliance in this area.

Recommendations

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

5. Common areas are well maintained.

6. Children's bedrooms are well maintained.

Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery

- Two certified foster parents stated they were not familiar with Needs and Services Plans (NSP).

- The initial NSPs for 4 children were not comprehensive as they did not include all of the elements in accordance with the NSP template. Specifically, medical and dental information was missing, dates of contact by the FFA Social Workers with placed children, and the FFAs Social Workers contact with DCFS Children's Social Workers (CSWs) was not documented.

It should be noted that the FFA representatives attended the OHCMD NSP Training for providers in August 2013 and were made aware of the NSP requirements. The NSPs reviewed were developed subsequent to the NSP Training.

Recommendations

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

7. Certified foster parents are familiar with NSPs.

8. FFA social workers develop comprehensive Initial NSPs and that all fields/sections are completed.

Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being

- Two certified foster parent stated that the children do not have life books/photo albums.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA's representatives stated that certified foster parents should have life books/photo albums for placed children.

Recommendation

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

9. All children have a life book or photo albums.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP FROM DCFS OHCMD's FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

The OHCMD's last compliance report dated July 24, 2013, identified nine recommendations.

Results

Based on OHCMD follow-up, the FFA fully implemented 7 of 9 previous recommendations for which they were to ensure that:

- All certified foster homes receive safety inspections and re-assessments/re-evaluations prior to or at re-certification and that documentation is maintained in the file.

- All certified foster parents complete the required annual training timely.

- All certified foster parents conduct disaster drills every six months and maintain documentation.

- All Initial NSPs are completed timely and a copy maintained in the child's file.

- Updated NSPs are completed timely.
- Quarterly Reports are completed timely.
- Children are visited weekly during the first three months of placement per the County of Los Angeles contract.

Based on OHCMD follow-up, the FFA did not fully implement 2 of 9 previous recommendations for which they were to ensure that:

- All certified foster parents are trained in Title 22 Regulations and ensure that all certified foster homes are in compliance.
- All certified foster parents participate in the development of the NSPs.

Recommendations

The FFA administration shall ensure that:

10. The outstanding recommendations for the July 24, 2013 monitoring report, which are noted in this report as Recommendations 2 and 7, are fully implemented.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA Administration expressed their desire to remain in compliance with all Title 22 Regulations and Contract requirements. OHCMD will confirm that these recommendations have been implemented during our next visit to the FFA in June 2014 to provide the FFA with technical assistance and follow-up to ensure recommendations have been implemented.

MOST RECENT FISCAL REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER (A-C)

A fiscal review of Masada Homes FFA has not been posted by the A-C.

MASADA HOMES
. . . building a foundation
Foster Family Agency

February 11, 2014, 2014

To: Rhonda David-Shirley, CSA III
9320 Telstar Ave. Suite 126
El Monte, CA 91731

From: Masada Homes, FFA
Leslie C. Oropeza
Supervisor

Subject: MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CORRECTIVE PLAN OF ACTION 01/2014 OUT OF HOME CARE MANAGEMENT DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

Dear Ms. David Shirley:

Masada Homes, Foster Family Agency would like to thank the Out-of-Home Care Management Division office for the comprehensive review conducted in December 2013. Masada Homes, FFA is committed to providing the best possible services to our children and families, thus we would like to express our genuine gratitude for the constructive feedback we received from the Auditor, Mr. Dario Villamarin.

The following are Corrective Plan of Actions to address the Auditor's recommendations:

Licensure/Contract Requirements

1.) SIRs are cross-reported to OHC.

As of 1/13/2014, Masada Homes, FFA has implemented training to all staff based on the Special Incident Reporting Guide for Foster Family Agencies. (Attachment 1)

A meeting was held with all Masada FFA Social Workers where the criterion of the SIR's was reviewed. All Social Workers were given examples of different SIR categories (Behavioral, Injury, Unauthorized Absence, Child Abuse, timeliness and cross reporting to the different entities involved.)

2.) The FFA is in full compliance with Title 22 Regulations, free of CCL's Citations.

During this reviewing period, Masada Homes FFA received two citations on Buildings and Grounds, and one physical abuse substantiated allegation.

On January 13, 2014 Masada Homes FFA had CCL Analyst, Belinda Gilmer conduct an In-Service training with all staff at which time substantiated allegations having to do with Buildings and Grounds were reviewed. Further, Mrs. Belinda Gilmer provided a comprehensive review of Title 22 Buildings & Grounds Section 89387. (Attachment 2)

On October 31st, 2013 the foster parent having to do with substantiated allegations of physical abuse was decertified. (Attachment 3)

3.) Assessments when placing more than two children in a certified home indicates how the certified foster mother would meet the needs of all children placed.

The supervising social workers have been trained to make better assessments when placing two children or more in a certified home, including when certified foster parents have less than 12 months of experience as per County Contract. The assessment has been revised as of January 8th, 2014. The new tool facilitates supervisors to provide concise information in regards to how the certified foster parents will be able to meet each of the minor's needs and evaluate additional areas required by County contract. We are confident that with the training and revised tool will lead to better assessments in regards to where the minor(s) are placed. Training was provided on January 15th, 2014 to those conducting the assessment to ensure the comprehension to meet County requirements. (Attachment 4)

Certified Foster Homes

4.) OHCMD is contacted regarding abuse/neglect information on prospective foster parents prior to certification.

Administrator will complete the OHC Child Abuse History Request with all Prospective Foster Parents. There is now a new Certification Protocol and the Program Specialist (PS) will be responsible for the oversight in this area to ensure that all required clearances are obtained prior to certification.

The PS will assure that an email is sent to OHC in regards to the PFP(s) and not continue forward with certification process until all clearances have been received in order to meet compliance with County Contract. (Attachment 5)

Facility and Environment

5.) Common areas are well maintained.

All Masada Homes Social Workers are to complete Monthly Reports/Monthly Inspections for their certified homes. On this report, it is required that Social Workers notate any deficiencies as well as plan of correction. Additionally, Certified Foster Homes will be placed on administrative hold until all necessary deficiencies are corrected within the time allowed.

It is important for Masada Homes to inform the interested parties that the deficiencies found in one of the certified homes was corrected within a week of being informed of the deficiencies. Pictures of the corrections were provided to Mr. Villamarin on January 14th during the exit interview.

Please refer to recommendations noted on #2.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained.

Please refer to CAP notated in #5 recommendations above. Masada Homes has diligently implemented the Corrective Action Plans addressing these two recommendations.

Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery

6.) Certified foster parents are familiar with NSPs.

Training was provided to all Certified Foster Parents as a means for them to understand what the NSP's consist of. The protocol of the goals will be explained. Additionally, Foster Care Social Workers will be responsible for reviewing the NSP's with Foster Parents during home visits and assure that the specific goals are being addressed.

7.) FFA social workers develop comprehensive Initial NSPs and that all fields/sections are completed.

Training was held on January 16th, 2014 with Masada Homes FFA Social Workers where the criteria of the NSP's were reviewed. All Social Workers were trained on properly developing initial NSP's as well as ensuring that all required fields and signatures have corresponding written dates where applicable. Further, the SMART protocol was once again reviewed. Supervisors will then make certain that when reviewing NSP's all fields are completed and the goals meet the above criteria.

It is important to note that Masada Homes interpreted the specific instructions provided at the County Wide NSP training to the best of our understanding given the examples that were provided by the County. However, now that the different criterion was clarified by Mr. Villamarin, Masada Homes will abide by the requirements.
(Attachment 6)

Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being

8.) All children have a life book or photo albums.

Social workers have been providing a 'Life Book Acknowledgement' to all minors in placement. Social workers will ensure that the certified foster parents are aware that each of them is to actively participate in collecting pictures/school projects/friends memorabilia in order for each minor to have upon being ready to transition to permanency. (Attachment 7)

We appreciate the level of professionalism and respect our agency experienced throughout the process and we look forward to a continued successful partnership with the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services. Masada Homes extends a warm welcome to our new OHC Monitor, Dario Villamarin for his time, observations, and recommendations as a means to improve the quality of our services.
Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie C. Oropeza, MS
Supervisor