COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2766
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

April 12, 2006

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Institute for Black Parenting Foster Family Agency (IBP or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with IBP, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

IBP is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. IBP has offices in Carson and Riverside and oversees a total of 94 Los Angeles County certified foster homes in which 129 DCFS children were placed. IBP is located in the Second District.

DCFS pays IBP a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, IBP receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of

these amounts, the Agency pays the foster parents between $624 and $790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid IBP approximately $2,380,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether IBP was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated IBP's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether IBP received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed IBP staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes.

Results of Review

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

IBP needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes. For example, we noted the following:

- Four (80%) of the five children sampled, did not receive their monthly psychological examinations by the prescribing physician as required by the County contract.
- For two (40%) of five children sampled using psychotropic medication, IBP did not maintain current court authorizations to administer the medication.
- For three (20%) of 15 children sampled, the children did not receive their medical and dental examinations within the timeframes specified by the County contract.

In addition, IBP's social workers did not conduct the required number of visits to the foster homes. Five (33%) of the 15 children sampled, IBP's social workers conducted only 41 of the required 68 visits during the children's first 90 days of placement.

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

Review of Report

On April 3, 2006, we discussed our report with IBP who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, IBP management indicates the Agency has taken action to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank IBP for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, PhD., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Zena Oglesby, Executive Director, IBP Foster Family Agency
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

To determine whether Institute for Black Parenting Foster Family Agency (IBP or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited 13 of the 94 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that the Agency billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in May and June 2005 and interviewed the 15 foster parents and 15 of the 31 children placed in the 13 homes. We also reviewed the documentation in the case files for the 15 foster parents and 15 children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activities.

Results

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

IBP needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure that the homes comply with all the provisions of Title 22 regulations and the County contract. Specifically, we noted the following:

Foster Home Visitations

- Two (16%) of 13 homes visited did not lock knives as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our audit, the contract violations in the home were corrected.

- One (8%) of 13 homes visited did not lock medications and cleaning detergents as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our audit, the contract violations in the home were corrected.

- One (8%) of 13 homes visited did not have an upstairs emergency escape plan as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our audit, the foster parent purchased an upstairs escape ladder.

- In one (8%) of 13 homes visited, the backyard was littered with dog feces which posed a health hazard. Subsequent to our audit, the Agency provided evidence that the backyard was cleaned and the home no longer had a dog.

Foster Parent Certification

- One (8%) of 15 foster parents did not have a health exam conducted prior to being certified by IBP as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

- One (8%) of 15 foster parents' files did not contain a completed Criminal Record Statement as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. A Criminal Record Statement, which the foster parent completes, allows the Agency to certify the foster parents prior to receiving a Department of Justice clearing. The foster parent subsequently did receive a criminal clearance from the Department of Justice.

Medical Services

- For two (40%) of five children using psychotropic medication, IBP did not maintain current court authorizations to administer the medication. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require the Agency to maintain a current court authorization for each child on psychotropic medication. In addition, four of the five children were not receiving monthly psychological examinations by the prescribing physician as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided current court authorizations for the two children using psychotropic medication.

- One (6%) of 15 children's initial medical examination was not conducted within 30 days of placement as required by the County contract. This child's initial medical examination was three months past due at the conclusion of our review.

- Three (20%) of 15 children did not receive their annual medical examination within the timeframes specified by the County contract. One of the three children's annual medical examination was conducted three months late and the other two children's medical examinations were an average of four months past due at the conclusion of our review.

- Three (20%) of 15 children did not receive their dental examinations within the timeframes specified by the County contract. One of the children's initial dental examination was conducted two months late and another child's initial dental examination was three months past due at the conclusion of our review. In addition, one child's annual dental exam was conducted three months late.

Children's Records

- Five (33%) of 15 children were not visited by the Agency's social worker the required number of times during the first 90 days of placement. The County contract requires the Agency's social worker to conduct weekly face-to-face visits with children during

the first 90 days of placement. For the five children, IBP's social workers conducted 41 of the required 68 visits.

- Two (13%) of the 15 children were not visited by the Agency's social worker the required number of times after the first 90 days of placement. The County contract requires the Agency's social worker to conduct no fewer than two face-to-face visits with children per month, approximately 14 days apart. One child was visited once during May 2005 and the other child was visited once during the period March 2005 through July 2005.

- One (7%) of 15 children exceeded the maximum age that IBP could bill DCFS for services without approval from Community Care Licensing (CCL). The County contract requires the Agency to maintain approval from CCL in instances in which services are provided to placements that are older that 17. Subsequent to our review, the Agency returned the young adult to DCFS and is no longer billing DCFS for the placement.

- Three (20%) of 15 children's initial Needs and Services Plans were not prepared within the timeframes specified in the County contract. The County contract requires that the Agency prepare an initial Needs and Services Plan within 30 days of placement. The three Needs and Services Plans were prepared between one and four months late.

Reporting Requirements

- Two (100%) of two children's Quarterly Reports did not contain information regarding their Independent Living Plan and Emancipation Plan as required by the County contract for children 14 years of age and older. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided the updated information.

- Sixteen (100%) of 16 Termination Reports reviewed for placements ending in April and May 2005 did not contain a closing summary of the Agency's records relating to the placement as required by the County contract.

- Fifteen (100%) of 15 children's case files did not contain documentation that DCFS social workers were updated by telephone on a monthly basis concerning the children's progress as required by the County contract.

Recommendations

IBP management:

1. **Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure the homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Ensure that foster homes lock knives, medications and cleaning detergents as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

3. **Ensure that foster homes are free of health hazards.**

4. **Ensure that foster parents obtain a health exam and complete a Criminal Clearance Statement prior to certification.**

5. **Ensure that children using psychotropic medications have current court authorizations and that the children taking psychotropic medications are evaluated by their prescribing physicians on a monthly basis.**

6. **Ensure that children receive medical and dental examinations within the timeframes specified in the County contract.**

7. **Ensure that staff conduct the required number of visits to foster homes.**

8. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans, Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports include all required information and are prepared within the timeframes specified by the County contract.**

9. **Ensure that staff contact the DCFS social workers on a monthly basis to discuss children's progress.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services that IBP billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed 15 children placed in 13 certified foster homes and 15 foster parents to confirm the services IBP billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from IBP generally met their expectation and the children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. However, one child stated that her foster parents did not spend the required $50 per month for clothing. The foster parent provided documentation to support only two months of clothing purchases during the seven months that the child

was placed in the home. IBP's Program Statement requires foster parents to spend a minimum of $50 per month for clothing for each child and to maintain documentation to support the purchases.

Recommendation

10. IBP management ensure that foster parents comply with the monthly clothing allowance standard as specified in the Agency's Program Statement.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether IBP social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed IBP's administrator and supervising social worker. We also reviewed IBP's case load statistics and payroll records.

Results

IBP social workers' caseloads exceeded the maximum allowed by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- During April 2005, four of six social workers in the Riverside office carried an average of 17 cases, which exceeds the maximum of 15 allowed by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

- During May 2005, two of six social workers in the Carson office carried an average of 17 cases, which exceeds the maximum of 15 allowed by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

IBP management needs to maintain sufficient staffing levels so that each social worker's caseloads do not exceed the maximum allowed by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

Recommendation

11. IBP management closely monitor social workers' caseloads to ensure that the actual number of cases assigned to each social worker does not exceed the maximum number allowed by the County contract.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether IBP's staff meets the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether IBP conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed IBP's administrator and supervising social workers. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

IBP's administrator, supervising social workers and social workers possess the required education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, IBP appropriately conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training to staff assigned to the County contract.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

Institute for
BLACK PARENTING

▲ INGLEWOOD
11222 South La Cienega Blvd., Suite 233
Inglewood, California 90304
(310) 693-9959 ~ Fax (310) 693-9979

△ INLAND EMPIRE
3100 Chicago Ave.
Riverside, California 92507
(951) 782-2800 ~ Fax (951) 782-2805

April 4, 2006

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

FROM: Margaret Lazenby, MSW
Program Manager

SUBJECT: INSTITUTE FOR BLACK PARENTING FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW

Pursuant to your review, this letter is in response to the audit recommendations stated in your findings. Your review had 11 recommendations for the agency. Listed below is each of those items followed by our corrective action plan and the steps we have taken to implement the recommendations.

Recommendations and Responses:

1. Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure the homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 regulations.

Corrective Action Plan: Agency Social Workers were given directives during a Foster Care Unit Meeting dated February 8, 2006 to complete the Title 22 Home Inspection Form approved by CCL on a quarterly basis. These forms now require the Certified Foster Parent to sign that their home was inspected and they are aware of any found deficiencies. If, during a routine visit, the Foster Care Social Worker notices violations, they are to immediately direct the violation to the attention of the Certified Foster Parent for corrections. The Social Worker is to make a follow-up visit within one week to ascertain that the deficiency has been corrected. For minor concerns, the deficiency is to be corrected during the visit. Supervisor will monitor this area on a monthly basis and provide continued training during Foster Care Unit meetings on a monthly basis for compliance.

2. Ensure foster homes lock knives, medications and cleaning detergents as required by County Contract and Title 22 regulations.

Corrective Action Plan: On February 8, 2006, Foster Care Social Workers reviewed Title 22 guidelines during the Foster Care Unit Meeting. Additionally, they were given the Title 22 Home Inspection Checklist to use during quarterly home inspections. The Foster Care Social Workers were informed to routinely assess the home for compliance concerns and inform the Certified Foster Parent of any concerns immediately. If any concerns are found, the Foster Care Social Worker is to conduct a follow-up visit to the home within one week to determine that the Certified Foster Parent understands their role of ensuring safety in the home. Foster Care Social Workers are to discuss with the Certified Foster Parent their role as parents to maintain compliance within the home by locking up knives immediately after use; keep medications locked and out of the reach of minors placed in their homes; and keep all cleaning products separate from food items and locked away. CFP is to sign off on the Title 22 Home Inspection Checklist. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

3. Ensure foster homes are free of health hazards.

Corrective Action Plan: On February 8, 2006, Foster Care Social Workers reviewed Title 22 guidelines during the Foster Care Unit Meeting. The Title 22 Home Inspection Checklist was reviewed during this meeting. Foster Care Social Workers were instructed to routinely walk through the home as well as inspect the yards for hazardous items to include: animal feces, broken toys that may pose a safety hazard to minors; locked fences surrounding pool/bodies of water, poisonous plants. The Certified Foster Parent is then instructed to correct the deficiency if any, and sign off on the Title 22 Home Inspection Check List. A follow up visit to the home is made within one week to ensure compliance. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

4. Ensure that foster parents obtain a health examination and complete a Criminal Clearance Statement prior to certification.

Corrective Action Plan: A Certification Checklist is used as a monitoring tool to ensure that all required documents are collected prior to certification. The Foster Care Social Worker gathers all required documents and signs required forms; the Foster Care Social Worker passes these documents to clerical to develop a file; Clerical passes the file to the Supervisor for review and signature; the Supervisor passes the file to Administration for review and signatures. Administration provides final approval for certification. If any documents are missing from the file, the file immediately goes back to the Foster Care Social Worker for completion. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

5. Ensure that children using psychotropic medications have current court authorizations and that the children taking psychotropic medications are evaluated by their prescribing physicians on a monthly basis.

Corrective Action Plan: The Foster Care Social Worker will monitor their child files reviewing the due dates for psychotropic medications. The FCSW will communicate during visits to the Certified Foster Parent's home the need to schedule monthly appointments with the medical provider to assess the minor's ongoing need for psychotropic medication usage. The Certified Foster Parent will be present with the minor at the medical provider's office and have the medical provider complete the Psychotropic Medication Evaluation Form. If the medical provider continues the minor's usage, the FCSW will contact the County Social Worker to obtain the Court approved psychotropic medication's form. A Request For Information Form will be faxed to the County Social Worker requesting this document. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

6. Ensure that children receive medical and dental examinations within the timeframes specified in the county contract.

Corrective Action Plan: During staff training on January 11, 2006, the Foster Care Social Workers were trained on how to assist the Certified Foster Parent with compliance concerns relating to meeting timeframes with medicals and dentals. The FCSW is to write specific dates in the Needs and Services Plan (a copy of the Needs and Services Plan is given to the Certified Foster Parent), indicating when medicals and dentals are due. At placement, the FCSW is to inform the CFP that the minor is to have their medical and dental within the first 30 days of placement as required by County and State guidelines. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

7. Ensure that staff conducts the required number of visits to foster homes.

Corrective Action Plan: Foster Care Social Workers submit their weekly schedules to the Supervisor indicating visits with their clients. Foster Care Social Workers meet two times per month with the Supervisor for supervision. During supervision, their files are audited to compare their visitation dates with their Progress Notes' dates and their weekly schedules. The Certified Foster Parent and the Foster Minor must sign each Progress Note during the visit. The Supervisor reviews the note and signs the document. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

8. Ensure that Needs and Services Plans, Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports include all required information and are prepared within the timeframes specified by the County contract.

Corrective Action Plan: All Foster Care Social Workers meet twice monthly with the Supervisor for supervision. During supervision, the child files are audited for compliance. This auditing tool includes the dates that reports are due and indicates whether they have been completed. Quality Assurance provides additional review of files. On February 8, 2006, the staff received training on how to write more comprehensive Needs and Services Reports, quarterly and Termination reports. This training directed the FCSW to address both short and long term goals, and to include Independent Living and emancipation information. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

In addition, the Supervisor will monitor foster children's age requirements. Prior to the child reaching the age of 18 an exception will be filed through Community Care Licensing (CCL).

9. Ensure that staff contacts the DCFS social workers on a monthly basis to discuss children's progress.

Corrective Action Plan: The Agency Social Worker will document on a Progress Note Form ongoing contact made with the County Social Worker by telephone. This Form will be filed in the minor's file. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW for compliance.

10. IBP management to ensure that foster parents comply with the monthly clothing allowance standard as specified in the Agency's Program Statement.

Corrective Action Plan: The Foster Care Social Worker will collect Receipts on a monthly basis from each Certified Foster Parent. These receipts are copied and the copies are kept in the files. Original receipts are returned to the CFP to be maintained in their home files.

11. Closely monitor social worker's caseload to ensure that the actual number of cases assigned to each social worker does not continually exceed the maximum number allowed by the County contract. If the number of cases assigned to the social workers continues to exceed the maximum number allowed by the County contract IBP Administration will hire additional social workers.

Corrective Action Plan: The Institute For Black Parenting has contracted with part-time temporary Social Workers to carry the cases until a new full-time social worker can be hired. The Supervisor will monitor the FCSW caseload for compliance.

I appreciate the time you spent reviewing our program and our agency will implement your recommendations fully.

Sincerely,

Margaret Lazenby, MSW
Program Manager

Cc: Zena Oglesby, MSW
Executive Director

Cynthia Willard, LCSW
Assistant Executive Director