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

July 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: **MASADA HOMES FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Masada Homes Foster Family Agency (Masada or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Masada, 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.

Masada is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Masada oversees a total of 15 certified foster homes in which 20 DCFS children were placed. Masada's headquarters is located in the Fourth District.

DCFS pays Masada 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, Masada receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between $624 and $790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2005-06, through May 2006, DCFS paid Masada approximately $416,000.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Masada was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Masada's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether the Agency 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 Masada staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a number 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. The three homes visited were well maintained and in compliance with Title 22 safety regulations. Masada also paid the foster parents their monthly payments in a timely manner.

Masada did not always complete the children's Needs and Services Plans in accordance with the County contract. For example, two of four Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain the children's assigned DCFS social worker's written approval. In addition, one Needs and Services Plan for one child did not contain updated long and short-term goals and emancipation services to address the child's poor school performance and need for emancipation related services. During the previous six month period, the child turned sixteen years old and went from being an honor student to receiving failing grades.

Masada did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication for one of the seven children receiving psychotropic medication as required by the County contract.

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

Review of Report

On June 12, 2006, we discussed our report with Masada who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Masada management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Masada 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, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
George Igi, Executive Director, Masada Homes Foster Family Agency
Louis Roque, Director, Masada Homes Foster Family Agency
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

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

Verification

We visited three of the 15 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Masada billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in October and November 2005 and interviewed the three foster parents and three of the four Los Angeles County children placed in the homes. We also reviewed the documentation in the case files for the three foster parents and four children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Masada provided the majority of services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from Masada met their expectations and the children stated they enjoy living with their foster parents. The homes visited were well maintained and in compliance with Title 22 safety regulations and the foster parents were appropriately certified in accordance with the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Masada paid foster parents their monthly payments in a timely manner.

Masada needs to ensure that children's Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required by the County contract. Masada also needs to ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication.

Needs and Services Plans

- Two (50%) of four Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain all of the elements required by the County contract. The plans did not address the children's ability to manage money and did not address the children's personal care and grooming. One of the plans also did not contain long and short-term goals and emancipation services to address the child's needs. During a six month period, two significant changes occurred for this child. The child turned sixteen years old and

went from being an honor student to receiving failing grades. Masada did not update the child's Needs and Services Plan to set goals to address the child's poor school performance and emancipation related services as required by the County contract.

- Two (50%) of four Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain the written approval of the children's assigned DCFS social worker as required by the County contract.

Frequency of Visitations and Contacts

- One (25%) of four children was not visited weekly by Masada's social worker during the child's first three months of placement. The child was visited only twice during her second month of placement. The County contract requires that the Agency's social worker make and document weekly visits with children during the first three months of placement.

Medical Services

- One (14%) of seven children who were taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication. The most recent court authorization for this child had expired for approximately three months prior to the Agency requesting a renewal. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the Agency received a current court authorization for the administration of the psychotropic medication.

Recommendations

Masada management:

1. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required by the County contract.**

2. **Ensure that social workers conduct the required number of visits to foster children.**

3. **Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Masada billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed three children placed in three certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services Masada billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they receive from Masada met their expectations. The children interviewed also stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and that they liked their assigned social worker.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether social workers' case loads 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 the director and supervising social worker and reviewed case load statistics and payroll records for October and November 2005.

Results

The social workers' caseloads averaged 12 placements and the supervising social worker supervised an average of two social workers during October and November 2005.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed Masada's director and supervising social worker. 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

Masada's director, supervising social workers and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Masada completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract. However, Masada's director did not have a current performance evaluation in his personnel file as required by the County contract. The most current performance evaluation for the director was conducted in 2003. Prior to the conclusion of our review, Masada's director received a current performance evaluation.

Recommendation

4. **Masada management ensure that staff receive annual performance evaluations.**

MASADA HOMES

. . building a foundation

A Division of Counseling & Research Associates

June 20, 2006

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

FROM: Louis Roque, FFA Director

SUBJECT: Masada Homes Foster Family Agency
Contract Compliance Corrective Action Plan

1. **NEEDS AND SERVICES PLANS:**
Plan Will be reviewed and approved by the supervising social worker prior to implementation to ensure that all needs and objectives are included and written approval of the CSW or supervisor is obtained.

2. **FREQUENCY OF VISITATIONS AND CONTACTS:**
FFA social work staff will maintain a monthly tracking system of visual contacts to be utilized by the supervising social worker in ensuring that all required visits are conducted.

3. **MEDICAL SERVICES:**
Social workers will maintain a monthly tracking system to be utilized by the supervising social worker in ensuring that court authorizations for psychotropic medications are obtained in a timely manner and maintained in the minor's file.

Ph: (310) 715-2020 • FAX (310) 327-4723
130 W. Victoria St., Gardena, CA 90248

4, **VERIFICATION OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:**
Masada human resources staff will ensure that performance evaluations are done yearly.

If you have any questions and/or concerns, please call our office at (310) 715-2020 X287.

Sincerely,

Louis Roque, MSW, LCSW
FFA Director
Masada Homes

LR:jst