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August 23, 2007

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE INCORPORATED FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Children's Institute Incorporated Foster Family Agency (CII or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with CII, 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.

CII is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. CII oversees a total of 15 certified foster homes in which 21 DCFS children were placed. CII's offices are located in the Second and Fourth District.

DCFS pays CII 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, CII 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. DCFS paid CII approximately $457,000 through May 2007 for Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether CII was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed CII's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations. The foster homes were also well maintained and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, CII maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by the CDSS Title 22 regulations.

CII did not always ensure foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes. Specifically, all three homes visited did not store knives in secured locations and one home did not lock up prescription medications. CII social workers also did not always visit the children as often as required.

In addition, CII did not always complete Needs and Services Plans (Plans), Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports. For example, two of four children's Plans had not been updated for more than a year. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 require Plans to be updated at least every six months.

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

Review of Report

On July 9, 2007, we discussed our report with CII who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, CII management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank CII 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: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Patricia Del Valle, Director, Children's Institute Incorporated FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE INCORPORATED FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Children's Institute Incorporated Foster Family Agency (CII 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 fifteen Los Angeles County certified foster homes that CII billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in December 2006 and January 2007 and interviewed the four foster parents and three of the twelve children placed in the three homes. We also reviewed the case files for the four foster parents and four children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

CII needs to ensure foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes. CII needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract and that the Plans, Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports are prepared within the timeframes specified in the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

Foster Home Visitation

- None of the three foster homes visited stored knives in secured locations.

- One (33%) of the three homes did not lock up prescription medications.

Needs and Services Plans

- Two (50%) of the four children's Needs and Services Plans (Plans) had not been updated for more than a year. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 requires that Plans be updated at least every six months.

- None of the four Plans reviewed addressed all of the elements required by the County contract. For example, three of four Plans did not address the reasons for the children's placements.

- None of the four plans reviewed had goals that were specific, measurable, or time-limited as required.

- None of the four Plans reviewed contained the children's DCFS social workers signature indicating the social workers' approved the Plans as required. There was documentation that the Plans were sent to the DCFS social worker for approval for three of the four Plans. In addition, the Agency did follow-up with the social workers when the Plans were not returned. However, there was no documentation that the fourth Plan was sent to the DCFS social worker.

Quarterly Reports and Termination Reports

- Two (50%) of the four children's current Quarterly Reports were not prepared within the time frames specified in the County contract. At the time of our review, these two Quarterly Reports were approximately two months past due.

- Two (50%) of the four Quarterly Reports did not address most of the elements required by the County contract. Missing elements included reporting on the status of the children's physical and psychological health, progress towards goals and tasks performed to reach these goals, reassessment of unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs.

- The two Quarterly Reports, for age appropriate children, did not contain a copy of the children's Emancipation Preparation Contracts as required.

- Termination Reports were not prepared for all eight children who left the Agency during our review period.

Medical Services

- One (25%) of the four children's annual medical and dental examinations were not current. The County contract requires children to have annual medical and dental examinations. The child's last medical exam was in April of 2005 and the last dental exam was in November of 2005.

- The Agency did not maintain documentation to ensure that the one child taking psychotropic medication was being seen monthly by the prescribing physician as required by the County contract. CII management believed the child was no longer taking the medication. However, we verified during an interview with the foster mother and child that the child was taking medication and was seen by the prescribing physician every month.

Children's Case Files

- One (25%) of the four children was not visited weekly by the CII social worker during the child's first two months of placement as required. A total of four weekly visits were not conducted.

- Three (75%) of the four children's case files did not contain the children's or the DCFS social workers' signatures (if the child was not old enough the DCFS social worker should sign for the child) indicating that they received an age appropriate orientation to the Agency's policies and procedures as required. The orientation should include the Agency's policies for discipline, complaints, health, discharge, etc. In addition, the files did not contain documentation that the children or the DCFS social workers received from CII written copies of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Legal Rights of Teens, house rules, discipline practices, grievance/complaint procedures and discharge procedures as required.

- Three (75%) of the four children's case files did not contain weekly allowance logs for December 2006 and January 2007, as required. We verified with the children that they did receive a weekly allowance. In addition, two of these three children's case files did not contain a current clothing inventory as required by the County contract. We verified when visiting the homes that the children had the appropriate amount of clothing.

Recommendations

CII management:

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

2. **Ensure that foster parents adequately secure knives, medications, and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.**

3. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports are updated in accordance with the time frames specified in the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

4. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract and that the DCFS social workers approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.**

5. **Ensure that Termination Reports are prepared for children who leave the Agency within 30 days of the date the child's placement ends.**

6. **Ensure that children's medical and dental exams are conducted within the time frames specified in the County contract.**

7. **Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications are monitored by the Agency's social workers.**

8. **Ensure that social workers conduct the required number of visits to children and that children's case files contain all information required.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

To determine whether the program participants received the services that CII billed to DCFS.

Verification

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

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from CII met their expectations and their assigned social workers visited them regularly. The children interviewed also stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether CII's social workers' caseloads do not exceed fifteen 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 CII's director and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for December 2006 and January 2007.

Results

CII's four social workers carried an average caseload of six cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised an average of four social workers.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed CII's director and reviewed each employee's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

CII's director, supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, CII conducted hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract. However, CII's two part time contracted social workers did not sign declarations stating that their combined caseload at all agencies would not exceed 15 placed children as required by the County contract.

Recommendation

9. **CII management ensure that all part-time contracted employees sign declarations stating their combined caseloads at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children.**

children's institute, inc.

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Response to Contract Review

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July 9, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Patricia del Valle, Psy.D
Administrator, Partners' Foster Care
Children's Institute, Inc.

Subject: Response to Partners' Foster Care, CII Agency Contract Review

The following is Partners' Foster Care response to the findings and recommendations made by the Auditor-Controller/Contract Monitoring Division during their contract compliance review.

Recommendations and Responses:

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

   Partners' Foster Care will conduct monthly trainings on Title 22 regulations.

2. **Ensure that foster parents adequately secure knives, medications and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.**

   Partners' Foster Care staff well conduct bi-monthly home inspections to ensure that prescription medications, store knives and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children are in a secured location as required by the County contract.

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3. **Ensure that Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports are updated in accordance with the time frames specified in the County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

   Partners' Foster Care social workers will receive ongoing training regarding Needs and Service Plans/ Quarterly Reports time frame specified in the County contract and Title 22 regulations. Administrator will ensure that Needs and Service plans are updated every six month and that Quarterly reports are submitted within the time frame specified in the County Contract and Title 22 regulations.

4. **Ensure that Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract and that the DCFS social workers approve in writing all Needs and Service Plans.**

   Partners' Foster Care Administrator will ensure that Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports elements required by the County contract are implemented. These elements include reason for placement, individualized goals that are specific, measurable or time-limited. Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports format has been implemented to address elements required by the County contract. Administrator has provided weekly trainings to Agency social workers on the utilization and required content information of these reports

   Partners' Foster Care staff will make every effort to obtain County Social Worker's signature on Needs and Service Plans. Partners' Social Worker will fax a copy of the report to the CSW and fax transmittal will be filed in client's chart. If signature for approval of the report is not obtained within a week, Partners' Social Worker will follow-up with a telephone call requesting approval. If approval is not received within a week after telephone call, the SCSW will be called requesting approval. SCSW response will be documented in case notes.

5. **Ensure that Termination Reports are prepared for the DCFS social worker within 30 days of the date of child's' placement has ended as required.**

   Partners' Foster Care staff will ensure that Termination Reports are prepared for the DCFS social worker within 30 days of the date of child's placement has ended. Administrator will conduct trainings on the required elements required by the County Contract and forwarded to the County social worker within 30 days of termination.

6. Ensure that children's medical and dental exams are conducted within the time frames specified by the County Contract.

Partners' Foster Care social workers will ensure that children's medical and dental exams are conducted as specified in the County contract. Foster. Children under the age of two will receive the medical examination as specified in the CHDP periodic table. Children two years and older will receive the annual medical examination and newly placed children are to be seen by a doctor and dentist within thirty days of placement.

7. Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications are monitored by the Agency's social workers.

Partners' Foster Care Administrator will ensure that Agency social workers are monitoring the deadlines for court authorization and ensure that Agency social workers maintain documentation indicating monthly visits by the prescribing physician as required by the County Contract.

8. Ensure that social workers conduct the required amount of visits to children and that children's case files contain all information required.

Partner's Foster Care Administrator will ensure that social workers conduct required amount of visits and that children's case files contain all information by conducting training to social workers and routine audits.

9. Partners Foster Care will ensure that all part-time contracted employees sign declarations stating their combined caseloads at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children.

Partners' Foster Care Administrator will ensure that all part-time contracted employees sign declarations stating that their combined caseloads at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children.

We appreciate your thorough review and welcome the feedback you have provided us within the scope of this review. Please be assured that we will utilize your input to assist us in improving our services to children placed in the foster care system.

Sincerely,

Manuel Rivera, Ph.D
Senior Director, Children's' Welfare.

Patricia del Valle, Psy.D
Administrator, Partners Foster Care