COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2706
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

WENDY L. WATANABE
CHIEF DEPUTY

October 4, 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: **SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency (Bright Future or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services contracts with Bright Future, 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.

Bright Future is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 21 certified foster homes in which 36 DCFS children were placed. Bright Future is located in the Fourth District.

DCFS pays Bright Future 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, Bright Future 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. Bright Future was paid approximately $815,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Bright Future 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 Bright Future's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several of the children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Bright Future generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, Bright Future's social worker caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Bright Future did not always ensure foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The parents at two of three homes visited did not adequately secure unsafe cleaning detergents. In addition, some areas of the third home visited were not well maintained. The bathroom tub was dirty and discolored the bathroom walls needed to be repainted, the door to the children's bedroom did not have a doorknob and the home's carpeting was worn and ripped in places.

Bright Future also did not always ensure that children taking psychotropic medications had a current court authorization for the administration of the medications on file. The court authorizations for five of the seven children taking psychotropic medications were expired at the time of our review.

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

Review of Report

On September 6, 2007, we discussed our report with Bright Future who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Bright Future's management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Bright Future 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
Dr. William Hill, Director, South Bay Bright Future FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency (Bright Future 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 21 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Bright Future billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in July and August 2006, and interviewed the three foster parents and seven of the 14 children placed in the three homes. We also reviewed the case files for the three foster parents and six children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

Bright Future 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. In addition, Bright Future needs to ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have a current court authorization for the administration of the medications and that the children are seen monthly by the prescribing physician. Bright Future also needs to ensure that the children's Needs and Services Plans and case files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Foster Home Visitation

- One (33%) of the three foster homes visited was not maintain in an acceptable manner. The bathtub in the bathroom of the home was dirty and discolored and the toilet was dirty. The carpet in was worn, dirty and ripped near the doorway to the children's bedroom. In addition, the children's bedroom door did not have a doorknob.

- One (33%) of the three homes visited did not have a smoke detector in the hallway leading to the children's bedroom.

- One (33%) of the three homes visited had two children sharing a bedroom with the foster mother's adult son. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations require that except for infants, children shall not share a bedroom with an adult.

- Two (66%) of the three foster homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions as required. In addition, the window safety device in the children's bedrooms in one of the two homes was obstructed by a bed making it difficult to release the safety device in case of emergency. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the Agency provided documentation that the bed was moved and that the two homes purchased cabinet locks to secure the detergents and cleaning solutions.

  Our prior audit report, dated April 7, 2005, also noted that Bright Future did not always ensure that foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes.

Medical Services

- Five (71%) of the seven children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication as required. Bright Future management provided documentation of attempts to obtain the authorizations. However, the Agency did not adequately follow up with the prescribing physician or the children's DCFS social workers when the current authorizations expired. The County contract requires Bright Future to maintain copies of court authorizations for the administration of psychotropic medications in the children's case files.

- The medical files for all seven children taking psychotropic medications did not contain documentation that the children were seen monthly by their prescribing physician as required.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- All six Needs and Services Plans (NSP) did not contain the signature of the children's DCFS social workers indicating the social workers approved the Plans. All six Plans were sent to the DCFS social workers. However, the Agency did not follow up with the social workers when the Plans were not returned.

- The NSP for two children who were 17 years of age did not include a discussion of the children's Independent Living Skills Program as required.

- All six Quarterly Reports did not include discussions of progress made towards the children's goals including tasks performed to reach the goals as required. In addition, two (34%) of the six children's Quarterly Reports did not include a copy of the children's Emancipation Preparation Contract.

Children's Case Records

- Two (33%) of the six children's files reviewed did not contain a signed acknowledgement by the children's DCFS social worker indicating receipt of the

Foster Youth Bill of Rights, house rules, discipline practices, grievance/complaint and discharge procedures.

- Bright Future's social workers did not document face-to-face visits with two (33%) of the six children during the first four months of placement. The County contract requires Bright Future's social workers to document their weekly face-to-face visits with children during the first ninety days of placement. Thereafter, bi-weekly visits shall be made and documented with the children. These two children's case files did not contain documentation for seven required visits during their first four months of placement.

- Three (50%) of the six children's progress notes did not contain sufficient details to permit an evaluation of services provided to the children. The progress notes for the children were very brief and repetitive. The County contract requires Bright Future to maintain and retain records on each child's interview, social worker progress notes and notes on the services provided by the various professional and paraprofessional staff. The records shall be in sufficient detail to permit an evaluation of services provided.

Recommendations

Bright Future 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 homes are well maintained with acceptable housekeeping and that children do not share bedrooms with adults.**

3. **Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways leading to the children's bedrooms.**

4. **Ensure that detergents and cleaning solutions are stored where they are inaccessible to children and that window safety devices are operable and not obstructed by furniture.**

5. **Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications and that the children are seen monthly by the prescribing physician.**

6. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required and that the DCFS social worker approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.**

7. **Ensure that children's case files contain all the information required and that children are visited the amount of times required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

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

Results

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated they were generally happy with the services they received from the Agency.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Bright Future'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 Bright Future's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Overall, Bright Future's social workers carried an average caseload of ten 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 Bright Future'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 Bright Future's administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Bright Future's administrator, supervising social worker, and social workers possessed the education and work experience required. However, all five social workers did not complete annual in-service training as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Bright Future's Program Statement requires social workers to attend no less than twenty hours a year of on-going training.

Recommendations

8. **Bright Future management ensure that social workers receive no less than twenty hours annual in-service training.**

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior monitoring review completed by the Auditor-Controller.

Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from Fiscal Year 2004-05 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on April 7, 2005.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained three outstanding recommendations. Bright Future fully implemented two of the recommendations. As indicated earlier, one finding from our prior report was also noted during this monitoring review.

Recommendation

9. **Bright Future management implement the one outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal Year 2004-05 monitoring report.**

South Bay Bright Future Youth Development Centers

24404 South Vermont Avenue, Suite 206 & 201
Harbor City, California 90710
Telephone 310-891-0096 Fax 310-891-0195 or 310-634-1405

September 10, 2007

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

From: Dr. William M. Hill, Chief Executive Officer
South Bay Bright Future Foster Family Agency

Subject: Response to Agency Auditor-Controller Contract Review-
A Department of Children and Family Services Service Provider

South Bay Bright Future has reviewed the findings on the Auditor-Controller contract compliance review. We have taken serious the recommendations offered and have implemented the following to our standard of service.

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

South Bay Bright Future Social Workers will turn in with their monthly paperwork, which includes a home evaluation (See Attachment A). The home evaluation will ensure compliance with the county contract and Title 22 regulations.

Supervisor will review and ensure county contract and Title 22 regulations with social workers and certified foster parents at the next foster parent training.

Ensure the foster homes are well maintained with acceptable housekeeping and that children do not share bedrooms with adults.

South Bay Bright Future Social Workers will ensure that the certified foster homes are well maintained with acceptable housekeeping submitting compliance as reflected on the home evaluation.

Social Workers will ensure that children will not share bedrooms with adults without prior exceptions through the County Social Worker and Community Care License.

Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways leading to the children's bedrooms.

Social Workers will ensure that certified foster homes have operable smoke detectors as outlined in Title 22, in the hallways leading to the children's bedrooms despite where else the certified foster parent may have smoke detectors.

Ensure that detergents and cleaning solutions are stored where they are inaccessible to children and that window safety devices are operable and not obstructed by furniture.

Social Workers will ensure that detergents and cleaning solutions are stored where they are inaccessible to children and will reflect compliance on the home evaluation form that is turned in monthly.

Social Workers will ensure that the window safety devices are operable and not obstructed by furniture as reflected on the home evaluation form turned in monthly.

Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications and that the prescribing physician sees the children monthly.

Social Workers will ensure that the supervisor is aware of all persons taking psychotropic medications. Supervisor will communicate with the Department of Children and Family Services D-Rate Unit (562-903-5335) and check the status of the psychotropic authorization submission, approval and obtaining a copy. Supervisor will communicate (via email, certified letter) with the County Social Worker, psychiatrist and certified foster parent regarding submission of the necessary authorizations.

Social Workers will ensure that the certified foster parents provide documentation regarding the monthly physician visitation with the prescribing physician. Supervisor will ensure compliance with the submission of monthly paperwork.

Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required and that the DCFS social worker approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.

Social Workers will start using the DCFS approved Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports effective 9/10/2007, which will ensure compliance with information required.

Social Workers and Supervisor will ensure DCFS social worker approve in writing all Needs and Service Plans and will document attempts to obtain DCFS social worker approve on the form itself.

Ensure that children's case files contain all the information required and that children are visited the amount of times required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulation.

Supervisor will provide monthly audits to the social workers regarding all the information required and that children will be visited by the social workers the amount of times required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Bright Future management ensures that social workers receive no less than twenty hours annual in-service training.

Social Workers will participate in quarterly training and supervisor will ensure documentation within their personnel file. Additionally, social workers will submit copies of any training attended outside of the agency for their personal file.

Bright Future management implements the outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal year 2004-05 monitoring report.

Administration will ensure compliance with the outstanding recommendation from the fiscal 2004-05 monitoring report and this year submitting monthly reports to the Chief Executive Officer.

BRIGHT FUTURE
Foster Family Agency

Foster Parent Name:_____ **Date:**_____

THIS FORM IS INTENDED TO ASSIST CERTIFIED FAMILY HOMES IN VERIFYING THAT THE HOME IS READY FOR INSPECTION. PLEASE USE THIS CHECKLIST TO ENSURE YOUR HOME IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE 22 REGULATIONS.

LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM:

_____Fireplace screened, floor/wall heaters are covered (inaccessible to children)
_____Stairway(s) made safe so infants cannot climb (i.e. gates, etc.)
_____Heating and cooling systems are working
_____Telephone is working

KITCHEN AREA:

_____Trash cans have a tight fitting lid
_____Chemicals removed from under the sink (i.e. Ajax, bug sprays, oven cleaners, all poisons, etc.)
_____Emergency information has been posted near the telephone
_____Food in refrigerator has been covered/all food stored properly
_____Hot water temperature has been set at 105-120 degrees
_____Gas ranges have been checked for safety and are working properly
_____Sharp knives are inaccessible to children
_____Food is wrapped or covered properly in both refrigerator/freezer
_____Contaminated or spoiled food is discarded
_____Food supplies are rotated on a schedule
_____There is an adequate food supply of fresh, perishable and non-perishable food in the home to prepare the next three meals and snacks
_____Powdered milk is not used as a beverage

BATHROOM AREA:

_____All chemicals/cleaning supplies have been removed or are locked and inaccessible to the Children
_____The shower/tub shall be clean, safe and in good repair

FIRST AID KIT CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING (Kit must be ready for review):

_____First aid manual
_____Sterile first aid dressing_____Bandages/Adhesive Tape
_____Scissors_____Tweezers_____Thermometer_____Antiseptic solution

BEDROOMS:

_____Foster children shall have their own bed (no one can share a bed)
_____Bunk beds need railings on the upper tier and can be used by children age five (5) and up
_____Children's mattresses shall be in good repair
_____No more than two (2) children to a room
_____Only infants are sharing a room with an adult (if caring for infants 0-23 months)
_____Infants sleeping in own bed
_____Clean linen is on each bed and in good repair (i.e. sheets, blankets, pillows, etc.)
_____Smoke detectors are available and in good working order and are tested on regular basis
_____Clothing logs up to date

_____Allowance logs up to date
_____Each child has his/her own personal hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, soap, Shampoo, etc.)

OUTDOOR AREA:

_____All windows and window screens must be in good repair (not broken or torn and free from hazards)
_____Trash cans need tight fitting lids
_____Lawn tools need to be made inaccessible to children
_____Pools and bodies of water need to be fenced or made inaccessible
_____A parent supervising children in a pool or body of water shall have a water safety certificate
_____Excess amounts of dirt and debris need to be removed (i.e. old cars, sharp metals, wood pile, Bricks, etc.)

MEDICATIONS:

_____All medications including over the counter medicines are locked inaccessible to the children
_____There are no expired medications (check the dates)
_____Medication labels are not be altered
_____Medications requiring refrigeration shall also be kept inaccessible to children
_____Medication logs are current
_____Psychotropic authorization is up-to-date (_____expires)

MISCELLANEOUS:

_____Guns must be locked up and ammunition locked separately
_____Children's records are complete
_____Current first aid and CPR (age appropriate) [Check with Foster Parent Coordinator or Request to see copy]
_____Proof of completion of 15 Education Units annually provided by Foster Family Agency (Attended last Training)
_____Current certificate posted in the home (everything matched dates, ages, number of children)
_____Emergency Plan is posted
_____Disaster drill is current (every six months or every time a new child is placed)

PERSONAL RIGHTS:

_____Children are free from corporal unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule. Coercion, threat, mental abuse or other action of a punitive nature including but not limited to; interference with daily living functions, such as eating, sleeping and toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning
_____Exits from rooms and the building are not locked in a way which prevents children from leaving

COMMENTS:

_____ _____
Agency Representative Date

_____ _____
Certified Foster Parent Date