COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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CHIEF DEPUTY

November 13, 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: **MASADA HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICE PROVIDER**

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

Background

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. The Agency oversees a total of eight certified foster homes in which nine DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Masada is located in Gardena 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. Masada was paid $280,257 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Masada 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 Masada'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 Masada generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, both of the foster homes visited were in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations. Masada also ensured that their social workers caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Masada did not always ensure that the children's Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) were prepared in accordance with the County contract. Specifically, one of the two NSPs reviewed did not contain the signature of the child's DCFS social worker indicating their approval. The second NSP did not address the child's ability to manage money or their personal care and grooming. In addition, Masada did not always prepare timely annual performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract. These two findings were also noted during the prior year's monitoring review.

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

Review of Report

On September 13, 2007, we discussed our report with Masada who was in general agreement with the findings. In their attached response, Masada'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 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: 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
George Ige, CEO, Masada Homes Foster Family Agency
Bernard Smith, Director, Masada Homes Foster Family Agency
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
MASADA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

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 two of the eight Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Masada billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in March and April 2007, and interviewed two of the three foster parents and one of the three children placed in the two homes. We also reviewed the case files for the three foster parents and two children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Masada generally met their expectations. In addition, both of the foster homes we visited were in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations.

Masada needs to ensure that the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) contain all the elements required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22. One of the two NSPs reviewed did not contain the signature of the child's DCFS social worker indicating their approval. The second NSP did not address the child's ability to manage money or their personal care and grooming.

Our prior audit report, dated July 12, 2006, also noted that Masada did not always ensure that the children's NSPs were prepared in accordance with the County contract.

Recommendation

1. **Masada management ensure that the Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required and that the DCFS social worker approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

We interviewed one child and two foster parents and observed one toddler placed in two Masada certified foster homes to confirm the services Masada billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster child indicated she enjoyed living with her foster parent 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 Masada'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 Masada's program coordinator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers.

Results

Masada's supervising social worker supervised one social worker and the Agency's social worker carried a caseload of nine cases.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Masada'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 Masada's program administrator and a personnel officer. We also reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Masada's program administrator and social worker possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided on-going training to staff working on the County contract. Masada's social worker did not have a current annual performance evaluation in her personnel file. At the time of our review, the social worker's annual performance evaluation was five months past due.

Our prior audit report, dated July 12, 2006, also noted that Masada did not always prepare timely annual performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

2. **Masada management ensure that staff working on the County contract receive annual performance evaluations.**

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Objective

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

Verification

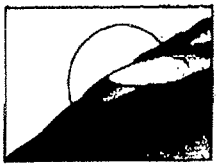
We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on July 12, 2006.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained four recommendations. Masada fully implemented two of the recommendations. As indicated earlier, recommendations 1 and 2 were also noted during the prior year's monitoring review.

Recommendation

3. **Masada management implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 monitoring report.**



MASADA HOMES

.. building a foundation

A Division of Counseling & Research Associates

September 27, 2007

Department of Auditor – Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention : Board of Supervisors

RE: Masada Homes Foster Family Agency Contract Review

Dear Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,

Based upon the findings of your auditor, Ms. Alice Marutani, the following Corrective Action Plan has been instituted:

Regarding the finding for Item I :

1. Ensure that Needs and Services Plan contain all the information required and and that the DCFS Social Worker approve in writing all Needs and Service Plans.

   The agency social worker/case manager will fax a completed copy of the new Needs and Services Plans (keep the faxed confirmation page/place in client's file) within the initial thirty (30) days of admit to the client's County Social Worker (CSW) for the worker's signature. The agency social worker/case manager will follow up to obtain the signature by utilizing the following procedure if the Service Plans has not been returned after the first week of being faxed to the CSW:

a. (First Week) - Place a call to the CSW requesting signature and to please return back to the agency.

b. (Second Week) – Place another call to CSW indicating our agency is in violation of Title XXII/Contractual Regulations.

c. (Third Week) – Place a call to the CSW's Supervisor regarding this matter.

- Agency staff will be instructed to document all attempts (e-mails, fax transmittals, phone calls, etc.) made regarding this matter.

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130 W. Victoria St., Gardena, CA 90248

Regarding the finding for Item II:

2. Masada management ensure that staff working on the county contract receive annual performance evaluations.

   The Masada Homes FFA Director will check/review the Human Resources Department's evaluation tickler on a monthly basis to indicate when staff evaluations are due. This tickler will reflect a month's time prior to the actual annual performance evaluation is to be completed.

Regarding the finding for Item III:

3. Masada management implement the outstanding recommendations from the fiscal year 2005-2006 monitoring report.

   The Masada FFA Director will discuss/review with agency FFA staff on a monthly basis the following outstanding recommendations identified in this audit to ensure that Masada Homes is in compliance with the Los Angeles County Foster Family Contract.

We hope that this Corrective Action Plan meets with your approval. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (310) 715 – 2020.

Sincerely,

Bernard Smith

Bernard Smith, MSW
Director of Foster Family Agency
Masada Homes