COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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December 17, 2007

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **BETA FOSTER CARE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SERVICE PROVIDER**

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

Background

DCFS contracts with Beta, 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.

Beta 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 ten certified foster homes in which 17 DCFS children were placed. Beta is located in La Mirada in the Fourth District.

DCFS pays Beta 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, Beta 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. Beta was paid $280,257 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Beta 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 Beta'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 Beta generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, Beta's staff possessed the experience and education required by the County contract.

Beta did not always ensure that foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example:

- One of the two homes visited did not adequately secure medications, knives and detergents as required.
- Two of the three children's Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not have specific and measurable goals.
- Two of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not have current CPR certificates. Prior to the conclusion of our review, Beta provided documentation that the two foster parents obtained current CPR certificates.
- A part-time contract social worker had not signed a declaration stating that the combined caseloads at all agencies did not exceed 15 placed children. Prior to the conclusion of our review, Beta provided the social worker signed declaration.

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

Review of Report

On September 21, 2007 we discussed our report with Beta who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Beta'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 Beta 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
Dina Barr, Regional Director, Beta Foster Family Agency
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
BETA FOSTER CARE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Beta Foster Care Foster Family Agency (Beta 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 ten Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Beta billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in October and November 2006, and interviewed two of the four foster parents and three of the six children placed in the two homes. We also reviewed the case files for the four foster parents and three children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

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

Beta needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes. In addition, Beta needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) contain all the required elements. Specifically:

Foster Home Visitation

- One (50%) of the two foster homes visited did not store medications, kitchen knives, and detergents in a secure location.

NSPs

- Two (67%) of the three NSPs did not include goals for the children that were measurable and specific.

Foster Parent Certification

- Two (50%) of the four foster parent certification files reviewed did not have current CPR certificates as required. Prior to the conclusion of our review, Beta provided documentation that the two foster parents obtained current CPR certificates.

Our prior audit report, dated May 24, 2004, also noted that Beta did not always ensure that foster parent certification files contained all the required information.

Recommendations

Beta management:

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

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

3. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations, including specific and measurable goals for the children.**

4. **Ensure that foster parent certification files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations, including current CPR certificates.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

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

Verification

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

Results

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

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Beta's social workers' case loads 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 Beta's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers.

Results

Beta's supervising social worker supervised two social workers and the Agency's full time social worker carried a caseload of 15 cases. However, Beta's part-time contract social worker, who carried three cases with the Agency, did not sign a declaration stating that the social worker's combined caseload at all Agencies would not exceed fifteen placed children as required by the County contract. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the Agency provided the required declaration signed by the part-time contract social worker.

Recommendation

5. **Beta management ensure that all social workers sign declarations stating that their combined caseloads at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children.**

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Beta'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 Beta's administrator and we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Beta's administrator, supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided on-going training to staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section

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 2003-04 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on May 24, 2004.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained three recommendations. Beta fully implemented two of the recommendations. As indicated earlier, (Recommendation #4), Beta did not always ensure that foster parent certification files contained all the required information.

Recommendation

6. **Beta management implement the outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal Year 2003-2004 monitoring report.**

BETA FOSTER CARE
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September 27, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
J. Tyler McCauley, Auditor-Controller

FROM: Dina M. Barr, M.A., MFT
Regional Director

SUBJECT: BETA FOSTER CARE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – RESPONSE

I would like to personally thank the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services' Auditor-Controller Department for reviewing our foster family agency, thereby providing us with the opportunity to improve our agency's services to our foster families and foster children. Our review was conducted by Cassandra Youngblood and I would like to commend her for always being professional and courteous in her dealings with our staff, our foster families, and our foster children.

The following is Beta Foster Care's response to the findings and recommendations made by the Auditor-Controller Department during their contract compliance review.

Recommendation	Response
1. Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDDS Title 22 regulations.	1. Beta Foster Care will provide training for all staff members regarding the foster home standards required by the County contract and CDDS Title 22 regulations.
2. Ensure foster parents adequately secure medications, knives, detergents and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.	2. In addition to Response #1 above, Beta Foster Care will revise its "Initial & Annual Foster Home Safety Review" form to clarify that medications, kitchen knives, and detergents must be locked up.

Recommendation	Response
3. Ensure that Needs and Services Plans contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.	3. Beta Foster Care will provide training for all social workers regarding the topic of measurable and specific goals on Needs and Services Plans.
4. Ensure that foster parent certification files contain all the information required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.	4. Beta Foster Care will implement new internal standards regarding foster parent certification file audits.
5 Beta management ensure that all part-time contracted social workers sign declarations stating that their combined caseloads at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children.	5. As a result of this review, Beta Foster Care developed a new form called "Part-Time Social Worker Caseload Limits Declaration" and now has all part-time social workers sign it at the time of employment.
6. Beta management implement the outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal Year 2003-2004 monitoring report.	6. As stated under Response #4, Beta Foster Care will implement new internal standards regarding foster parent certification file audits.

Thank you again for the opportunity to improve our foster family agency's services to our foster families and foster children.

Sincerely,

Dina M. Barr, MA, MFT

Dina M. Barr, M.A., MFT
Regional Director