



County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602



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May 14, 2020

To: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair  
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From:   
Bobby D. Cagle  
Director

**SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**REVIEW OF REPORT**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Contracts Administration Division (CAD) conducted a Contract Compliance Review of the Seneca Family of Agencies Foster Family Agency (the Contractor) in May 2019. The Contractor has one office located in Orange County. The office provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children, children placed by Orange County and Non-Minor Dependents.

**Key Outcomes**

<b>NUMBER OF PRIORITY FINDINGS</b>
<b>PRIORITY 1</b> 3
<b>PRIORITY 2</b> 3
<b>PRIORITY 3</b> 1

CAD conducted an on-site Contract Compliance Assessment review of the Contractor's compliance within the following applicable areas: General Contract Requirements; Resource Family Home (RFH) Requirements; Facility and Environment; Engagement and Teamwork; Needs and Services Plans; Permanency; Education and Independent Living Program Services; Health and Medical Needs; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; and Personnel Files.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

The Contractor was in full compliance with 7 of 11 applicable areas of CAD's Contract Compliance Review: RFH Requirements; Needs and Services Plans; Permanency; Education and Independent Living Program Services; Health and Medical Needs; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; and Personal Files.

For the purpose of this review, six DCFS placed children were selected for the sample. CAD reviewed the six children's files and interviewed four children to assess the level of care and services they received, two were pre-verbal. Additionally, six discharged children's files were reviewed to assess the Contractor's compliance with permanency efforts.

CAD reviewed four RFH files and three staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. CAD also conducted interviews with staff and the Resource Family Parents. Site visits were conducted to the Contractor and the RFHs to assess the quality of care and supervision provided to the placed children.

CAD noted findings in the areas of:

#### Priority 1

- Engagement & Teamwork
  - Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting participants were not identified.
  - CFT meetings were not documented/recorded.
  - CFT decision-making process for each goal was not identified.

#### Priority 2

- General Contract Requirements
  - Special Incident Reports (SIRs) were not properly maintained, six SIRs were not reported timely, eight were not reported to the Community Care Licensing Division.
- Facility and Environment
  - Common quarters were not safe or well maintained, scissors were observed in an unlocked kitchen drawer within reach of small children.
  - The required Certificates of Approval, Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Personal Rights and emergency telephone numbers were not posted or visible.

#### Priority 3

- Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being
  - Children were unable to report having a voice choice as the CFT meetings were not documented/recorded.

On June 26, 2019, the DCFS CAD Children Services Administrator I and II and Out-of-Home Care Management Division Quality Assurance Specialist held an exit conference with the Contractor's representatives.

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The Contractor's representatives agreed with the review findings and recommendations and were receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve the Contractor's compliance with regulatory standards.

The Contractor provided the attached approved Corrective Action Plan addressing the noted findings in this compliance report.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

BDC:KR  
LTI:bm

#### Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer  
Arlene Barrera, Auditor-Controller  
Raymond Leyva, Interim Chief Probation Officer  
Sheila Mitchell, Chief Deputy Probation Officer, Juvenile Services  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee  
Ken Berrick, Chief Executive Officer, Seneca Family of Agencies  
Kellee Coleman, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division  
Monique Marshall-Turner, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division



July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Beatriz Meza  
Los Angeles County - Department of Children and Family Services  
Contract Compliance Monitor

Dear Ms. Meza,

Please find below the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) requested for the following items identified in the 2019 FFA Monitoring Review Exit Summary:

**General Contract Requirements**

**6. *Special Incident Reports (SIR's) are properly documented.***

The review identified that out of the 29 SIRs, 6 were not cross reported timely and out of the same 29 SIRs, 8 were not cross-reported to CCL. In order to address this, Seneca will do the following:

- Provide and review *Exhibit A-5 Special Incident Reporting Guide* with all program staff, highlighting reportable incidents, timelines, and to whom all incidents are to be reported according to DCFS policy. The Placement Program Assistant Director will facilitate a Special Incident Reporting Training at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 14, 2019 to review and clarify expectations.
- In order to be aligned with DCFS policy, Seneca will:
  - Ensure all SIRs involving medical attention are reported to CCL.
  - Ensure all incidents involving head injury will include follow up medical care and thus be reported to CCL.
  - On a case by case basis determine if minor injuries (scrapes, cuts, bruises) that are the result of developmentally appropriate activities and are not assessed to require medical attention, should be reported via iTrack based on the unique circumstances of the case and agreements developed in the CFT. Based on the findings in the review, such instances are not required to be reported to CCL, unless follow up medical care is needed.
- Revise administrative procedures to ensure that all significant incidents are reported to CCL, per DCFS policy. As there is not an option to directly cross report to the Orange County CCL office through which our program is licensed within the iTrack application, administrative staff will send the SIR to CCL via email and file the email with the SIR as verification that it has been submitted to CCL. Administrative staff have been trained to do so as of the submission of this CAP and this procedure is effective immediately.
- Seneca will continue to provide training to all Resource Families related to Special Incident Reporting as part of the pre-approval training, highlighting reportable incidents and the

importance of timely reporting. Further, the information will be reviewed with the Resource Parents upon placement and throughout the placement when a refresher is deemed necessary.

- For children and youth currently in placement, the Seneca social worker will review incident reporting expectations with resource families during contacts throughout the month of August, ensuring all resource parents with placed children have received the information by August 31, 2019.

#### **Facility and Environment**

*15i. If appropriate, knives and sharp objects are safely stored and locked.*

During the review, scissors were observed in an unlocked kitchen drawer and within the reach of children (ages 1.7 and 2.9). In order to address this, Seneca will do the following:

- For the specific family identified in the review, the Seneca social worker has confirmed that the issue has been resolved and the scissors are now stored out of reach of the children.
- Continue to conduct home safety inspections at least every 6 months, and more often as deemed appropriate to ensure that the home environment is safe and that necessary safety measures are developmentally appropriate and responsive to any identified risk factors.
- Resource Families will be trained to use the Reasonable and Prudent Parent standard to determine if it is necessary and appropriate that knives and sharp objects be safely stored and locked. This will be reviewed with the family in pre-approval training, upon placement, during routine home safety inspections, and more frequently as needed.
- Social workers will confirm that all knives and sharp objects including scissors are safely stored and locked when determined to be appropriate. When making this determination, social workers will assess the child's developmental level and capacity to safely use items such as scissors or knives for food preparation. Social workers will ensure such items are inaccessible to young children who do not possess the skills to use these items without direct supervision. Additionally, the social worker will assess for any identified risk factors, such as threat of harm to self or others that would determine it to be appropriate for such items to be locked as part of a safety plan.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to securing knives and other sharp objects at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 14, 2019. Social workers will review information with resource families during contacts throughout the month of August and ensure all home are in compliance as explained above by August 31, 2019.

*16. Resource Family Homes have posted and visible in the home all required notices (Certificate of Approval, Foster Youth Bill of Rights, Personal Rights, and Emergency Telephone Numbers)*

While the resource families had the required documents available in the home, during the review the above forms were not physically posted in the home. In order to address this, Seneca will do the following:

- Upon approval and placement, Seneca social workers will collaborate with the resource family to ensure that all required notices are posted and visible in the family home. The social worker

will assist the family to identify locations to post such notices as required, while making an effort to maintain the quality of the family home environment.

- During home inspections, social workers will verify that all required documents continue to be posted and are current and up to date.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to posting required notices at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 14, 2019. Social workers will review information with families during home visits throughout the month of August and ensure all notices are posted as explained above by August 31, 2019.

### **Engagement and Teamwork**

*20. CFT participants have been identified.*

*21. The FFA documented the children's CFT meetings and collaboration*

*22. NSP goals identified the children's CFT team decision-making process for each goal*

During the review, CFT meeting notes were unable to be found in 3 out of the 6 children's' files, therefore, the reviewer was unable to determine if CFT requirements had been satisfied. In order to address this, Seneca will do the following:

- Seneca social workers will make efforts to collaborate with the Children's Social Worker to identify CFT participants and encourage engagement among CFT members to support the child and the development of Needs and Services Plan goals and ensure that all efforts to do so are documented in the children's file.
- Seneca social workers will document all requests to schedule a CFT meeting in the Needs and Services Plan. A CFT meeting will be requested as needs arise and at minimum a meeting will be requested every 6 months in an attempt to ensure that the team is meeting on a regular basis.
- Seneca social workers will request a copy of all CFT meeting notes from the Children's Social Worker and document all efforts to obtain copies of the CFT meeting notes in the Needs and Services Plan.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to Child and Family Team Meetings at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 14, 2019. Additionally, administrative staff will implement procedures for tracking CFT meetings by August 31, 2019.

### **Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-being**

*51. Children reported having a voice and choices in the CFT meeting*

As with the above finding, CFT meeting notes were unable to be found in 3 out of the 6 children's' files, therefore, the reviewer was unable to determine if the children were determined to have voice and choices in the CFT meeting. In order to address this, Seneca will do the following:

- Follow the plan outlined above to document requests for CFT meetings and efforts to obtain CFT meeting notes to ensure this information can be found in the child's file.
- Seneca social workers will ensure that youth are included in the CFT meeting as developmentally appropriate and included in the process of identifying needs and decision-making processes.
- Seneca social workers will ensure that the youth's involvement in the CFT meeting is documented in the meeting notes and will develop goals collaboratively with the youth using their own words whenever possible.

- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to Child and Family Team Meetings at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 14, 2019. Additionally, administrative staff will implement procedures for tracking CFT meetings by August 31, 2019.

I, Molly Shaeffer, the Assistant Director of the Placement Program at Seneca Family of Agencies will oversee the implementation of this Corrective Action Plan, including required training, implementation, and monitoring of actions identified above. Such efforts to do so will be completed in individual and group supervisions and all-staff meetings.

Thank you for your input and collaboration throughout the review process to further improve our program and the services provided to our children and families. We look forward to continuing our partnership with DCFS to serve the children of Los Angeles County. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Molly Shaeffer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Shaeffer, LCSW

Assistant Director - Southern California Placement Program  
Seneca Family of Agencies