



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL PALM BEACH COUNTY

Sheryl G. Steckler
Inspector General

August 5, 2013

Chief Executive Officer Gaetana D. Ebbola
Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
2300 High Ridge Road
Boynton Beach, Fl. 33426

Re: IG Notification #2013-0011

Dear Ms. Ebbola,

According to information obtained by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Children's Services Council provides funding to the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Palm Beach County which in turn, funds the City of Pahokee's (City) After School Program (Program) to provide after school services for which payment is based upon the actual attendance of children on a daily basis. According to ELC's agreement with the City, sign-in/sign-out sheets maintained by the Program must be used to "verify attendance for enrollment and payment purposes." CSC reported an incident of possible mismanagement of funds after an audit of the Program was conducted by ELC's contracted program monitoring provider, Family Central, Inc. (FCI) and found that the attendance verification sheets (sign-in/sign-out logs) had not been properly maintained as they were missing parent signatures, which were used to verify a child's attendance.

On February 6, 2013, FCI initiated a "full monitoring" of the Program¹, at which time it was discovered that the Program had not obtained the appropriate attendance verifications during a three month period (November 2012 – January 2013). It was noted by FCI that for the month of January 2013, three separate attendance sheets were collected by Program staff, all of which contained inconsistent documentation. For example, attendance sheets for the period of November 2012 – January 2013, collected in February 2013, contained no parent signatures for some children; however, when those same attendance sheets were reviewed in April 2013, parent signatures appeared. FCI noted a 77.7% error rate attributed to the lack of attendance verification.

The OIG conducted interviews of both City and Program staff, of which a majority indicated that sometime in November 2012, they had been instructed by Interim City

¹ This full monitoring was initiated after an unrelated incident occurred at the Program.

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Parks and Recreation Director Ivory Paschal that parent signatures were no longer needed on the attendance verification sheets. Ms. Paschal denied instructing any staff members to forgo the parent signatures and attributed their accusations to personal differences. The OIG did not find any information to suggest fraudulent activity by City and/or Program staff.

Based on ELC's findings, on May 15, 2013, ELC entered into a Compliance Plan with the City, which included a stipulation that an attendance verification accuracy rate of 97% would have to be achieved during the Post Audit Monitoring. On June 11, 2013, the Post Audit Monitoring was conducted by ELC and the City was found to have failed to meet the 97% accuracy rate stipulated in the Compliance Plan. On July 22, 2013, ELC notified the City that funding for the Program would be revoked. As of this letter, the final date for services has yet to be determined.

ELC's monitoring disclosed that the City was unable to provide attendance verification for various time periods, resulting in an overpayment totaling \$24,614.59. The City has repaid a total of \$6,116.10 while \$18,498.49 remains outstanding.

Based on the aforementioned, the OIG makes the following corrective action recommendations:


1. ELC take appropriate corrective action regarding ELC's agreement with the City.

It is noted that on May 15, 2013, ELC entered into a Compliance Plan with the City for corrective action; however, during a Post Audit Monitoring, the City was unable to achieve the attendance verification accuracy rate and on July 22, 2013, the City was advised that their agreement with ELC would be revoked. No further action is necessary.

2. CSC and ELC should ensure that all overpayment of funds are collected and refunded to the appropriate entities.

It is noted that to date, \$6,116.10 has been repaid; however, \$18,498.49 remains outstanding.

Sincerely,



Donald Balberchak
Director of Investigations
Office of Inspector General

Cc: Warren Eldridge, Chief Executive Officer, Early Learning Coalition