

Report in Brief

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Review

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services manages the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program, which served between 7,000 and 8,000 children annually from fiscal years (FYs) 2005 through 2011. In FY 2012, however, the number of children entering the program began to increase, and in FY 2014 (the “surge” year), ORR served 57,496 children. Because of the rapid increase of vulnerable children entering ORR care, the significant increases in program funding, and the multiple changes to ORR policies during FY 2014, we are conducting a series of reviews of ORR care providers across the Nation.

We selected for review Florence Crittenton Services of Orange County, Inc. (Crittenton), a UAC program grantee, because Crittenton had a finding related to the ORR grant in its FY 2014 Single Audit report and had citations from the State licensing office related to the health and safety of children in its care.

Our objective was to determine whether Crittenton met applicable safety standards for the care and release of children in its custody.

How OIG Did This Review

We inspected three shelter-care facilities, reviewed a judgmental sample of employee files, and reviewed a statistical sample of case files for those children who had been released to a sponsor during FYs 2014 and 2015 (October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2015).

Florence Crittenton Services of Orange County, Inc., Did Not Always Meet Applicable Safety Standards Related to Unaccompanied Alien Children

What OIG Found

Although Crittenton met most of the applicable safety standards for the care and release of children in its custody, Crittenton released some children to sponsors without conducting all required background checks, and some UAC case files were missing documentation to verify that Crittenton met certain safety standards. In addition, the numbers of released children listed in Crittenton’s quarterly performance progress reports were not readily verifiable for accuracy.

On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that Crittenton released 2 percent of children to sponsors without conducting all required background checks. Without conducting all required background checks, Crittenton did not follow ORR policies to ensure that, for an estimated 16 children, sponsors were properly vetted. We also estimated that Crittenton did not properly document the care and release of approximately 9 percent of all children released to sponsors in FYs 2014 and 2015. Without adequate documentation in the case files, ORR could not be assured that, for an estimated 71 children, Crittenton had followed ORR policies. In addition, without accurate information on the number of released children, ORR did not have assurance that Crittenton ensured program integrity and that every child Crittenton released was accounted for.

What OIG Recommends and Crittenton Comments

We recommend that Crittenton (1) ensure that all required background checks are conducted and documented, (2) provide periodic training to staff on maintaining documentation related to public records checks, (3) increase oversight of its quality review for UAC case files to ensure that all required documentation is maintained in the files, (4) develop policies and procedures for obtaining necessary documentation in the case files for children transferred from another shelter care provider, and (5) develop a process to document the information used to prepare its quarterly performance reports and verify the information’s accuracy.

In written comments on our draft report, Crittenton did not indicate concurrence or nonconcurrence with our recommendations; however, it provided information on actions that it had taken or planned to take to address our recommendations.