



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL INTERNAL AUDIT



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Assurance Report

Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Use of Recovery Act Funds is Consistent with Grant Requirements

Summary

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) emphasizes a commitment to ensuring that public funds are expended responsibly and in a transparent manner. Consistent with these expectations, the Department of Children and Families (Department) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Internal Audit Unit conducted an assurance project to determine whether a contracted provider, the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV), used Recovery Act funds for authorized purposes. We reviewed documentation to support the use of the funds and interviewed FCADV and Department staff. We concluded that FCADV's use of the funds was consistent with grant requirements.

Background

In May 2009, the Department was awarded a Recovery Act funded grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women in the amount of \$6,976,652. The grant provides funding for a program, *Recovery Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (Recovery STOP) Violence Against Women*, that supports services for survivors of domestic violence.

As a recipient of Recovery Act funding, the Department is responsible for ensuring that funds are used for authorized purposes. The OIG Internal Audit Unit has been conducting a series of projects that align with this expectation of accountability.¹ The first two projects focused on the Department's internal controls for managing Recovery Act grants for the Homelessness and Domestic Violence programs and on data reporting. For this third project, we focused on how Recovery Act grant funds are being used. We began with a risk assessment to identify which providers using the grant funds were at higher risk based on award amount, type of service, length of time the provider has contracted with the Department, contract monitoring history, complexity of

¹ Reports may be found at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/ig/reports/auditsearch.aspx>.

the contract or subgrant, and financial status. Based on the results of the assessment, we chose to review FCADV's use of Recovery Act funds for fiscal year 2009-2010.

FCADV is a statewide association whose primary purpose is to represent and provide technical assistance to certified domestic violence centers in Florida. FCADV received two separate Recovery STOP awards in amounts of \$1,966,975 and \$188,370. Our review focused on the larger of the two awards, which was added to an existing contract, LN902. The funds are designated for training, technical assistance, participation in statewide meetings, specialized projects and victim services.

Results

Recovery STOP grant funds must be used to:

- Develop and implement training for law enforcement, judges, other court personnel, and prosecutors.
- Develop and implement more effective policies, protocols and services.
- Support statewide, multidisciplinary efforts to coordinate responses to violent crimes against women.
- Support the placement of special victim assistants in law enforcement agencies.
- Develop, implement and strengthen victim services and criminal justice initiatives.

Consistent with these requirements, FCADV used the grant funds for implementing specialized projects, conducting meetings, and providing training, educational materials, and legal services. Examples include the following:

Intimate Violence Enhanced Service Team (InVEST) Project

One of FCADV's specialized projects provided training, technical assistance and educational materials for a program that targeted high risk domestic violence crime cases by partnering law enforcement InVEST participants with domestic violence center advocates. FCADV subcontracted with local law enforcement agencies to implement the project. Training and technical assistance were provided for law enforcement and domestic violence center advocates.² Training agendas and attendance logs were maintained. To encourage attendance at the training events, FCADV provided scholarships for law enforcement and domestic violence center advocates and maintained a system for tracking these funds. FCADV also created, printed and distributed InVEST how-to manuals and provided resource materials for law enforcement and domestic violence center staff.

Child Protective Investigator (CPI) Project

Grant funds were also used to implement a specialized CPI project designed to encourage collaboration between domestic violence centers and local sheriff's offices that conduct child protective investigations. FCADV subcontracted with a national expert to provide training. FCADV maintained documentation of the training, technical

² A "domestic violence advocate" is defined in Section 90.5036, Florida Statutes as "any employee or volunteer who has 30 hours of training in assisting victims of domestic violence and is an employee of or volunteer for a program for victims of domestic violence whose primary purpose is the rendering of advice, counseling, or assistance to victims of domestic violence."

assistance and scholarships provided. Brochures about the program were printed and distributed to domestic violence centers and local sheriff's offices to provide information to domestic violence survivors.

Dependency and Drug Court Project

A dependency and drug court project was also implemented. This project involved the screening of cases to identify domestic violence victims and connect them to services. FCADV subcontracted for the implementation of this project and maintained documentation of technical assistance provided.

Other Uses of the Funds

FCADV used the grant funds to subcontract with national experts to develop and conduct domestic violence fatality review training and to provide consultation on the use of danger assessment tools.³ FCADV also conducted a meeting of the Statewide Fatality Review Team⁴ and paid for travel for members of the team to attend. FCADV tracked the travel scholarships provided and maintained agendas and attendance logs.

The grant funding was also used to obtain legal services for survivors of domestic violence. FCADV provided funding to domestic violence centers to obtain the legal services locally and subcontracted directly with legal service providers. Documentation was maintained to support the legal representations and consultation provided. Funds were also used to duplicate and translate into six languages a digital versatile disc (DVD) explaining the injunction for protection⁵ process. The DVDs were distributed to domestic violence centers and court systems throughout the state.

Conclusion

We found that extensive documentation was maintained and reports were submitted to the contract manager as required. We determined that for fiscal year 2009-2010, FCADV's use of Recovery STOP funds was consistent with grant requirements.⁶

Objective

Our objective for this project was to determine whether FCADV used Recovery Act funds for authorized purposes.

³ Danger assessments are used by law enforcement, health care professionals, and advocates for victims of domestic violence in an effort to identify abused women who are at the highest level of danger.

⁴ A Statewide Fatality Review Team is authorized by Section 741.316, Florida Statutes. The team meets periodically to identify gaps in service delivery to domestic violence victims, promote training, coordinate activities of the agencies involved, and share information.

⁵ Commonly referred to as a "restraining order," an injunction for protection is an order signed by a judge that prohibits an offender from certain acts or prohibits an offender from being in or going to certain places.

⁶ While conducting this project, FCADV made us aware of significant billing issues involving one of their subcontracted providers, also a direct provider of the Department. The issues primarily involved the billing of multiple funding sources and were beyond the scope of this project. FCADV promptly took action to identify the issues and is working with Department staff and other funders to conduct a detailed analysis.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of this project focused on FCADV's use of Recovery STOP grant funds associated with contract LN902 for fiscal year 2009-2010.

To meet our assurance objective, we conducted a variety of activities including:

- Research of applicable laws, rules, guidance, policies and procedures.
- Research of prior relevant reports.
- Interviews with Department and FCADV staff.
- A review of the Recovery STOP grant agreement, the Department's Recovery STOP Implementation Plan, contract LN902, and other relevant documents.
- A review of FCADV's annual performance report, monthly status reports, monthly job reports, training agendas, training attendance logs, quarterly performance reports, quarterly financial reports, and other supporting documentation.
- An on-site visit conducted on October 13-14, 2010.

Acknowledgements

The Office of Inspector General would like to thank the staff from FCADV, the Assistant Secretary for Programs Domestic Violence Contract Unit and the Office of Domestic Violence for their assistance with this project.

Management's Response

Department and FCADV management were provided an opportunity to respond to the draft version of this report. The Department provided no comment to the draft report. FCADV management suggested minor changes, which were incorporated into this final report.

This project was conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, published by the Institute of Internal Auditors. The project was conducted by Theresa Skipper and Shandyka Strivelli under the supervision of Jerry Chesnutt, Director of Auditing, (850) 488-8722.

This report is available on our website: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/ig/pubs_ia.shtml