

August 12, 2009

Mr. Harold Jergenson, Oversight Specialist  
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth  
500 N. Broadway Avenue, Suite 300  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102-6200

Mr. Jergenson,

I appreciate the thoroughness of your visit of Rogers County Youth Services. We do strive to provide excellent services and have made changes in regards to the violations that you noted from your visit.

In regards to the violations, a meeting was held with the Shelter Supervisor, Office Manager and myself regarding requirements for personnel files for shelter staff. The nature of keeping a shelter properly staffed is difficult and frustrating. We have not been afforded the luxury of an extended amount of time to advertise for open positions, interview qualified applicants, complete employment qualifications and deliver training to the employees. One step we have taken to expedite an employee's hire is to conduct reference checks over the phone. We are at fault for not putting the date and time on these references. I failed to inform our new shelter supervisor of this requirement. She is now aware, and will ensure that reference checks are completed and properly documented. It will be monitored by the office manager, who will inform me when all requirements are met. At that time, the new hire may begin training for their job.

This process will also occur for the TB testing. I will state that in the case noted on your visit, the employee had taken his TB test. The next morning, he received one hour of paper work training. He also received 4 hours of overnight training and had no contact with the residents. The next day, his TB test was examined and he was cleared for work. It is our charge to protect the youth in our care. I feel as though the actions taken in regards to that employee were reasonable in order to have our shelter properly staffed in a timely manner, and no youth were placed at risk by our actions. This action, however, was an exception to our normal procedure, and not the norm. I will also state that we have lost a minimum of three employees over the past four months because pre-employment requirements, namely background checks, took so long that the applicants found other jobs while waiting to begin

employment at our agency. This causes staff shortages and employees who work extended hours on a regular basis.

Again, I understand that the requirements are in place to protect our youth, and with that, we are working towards the same goal. RCYS will continue to comply with all licensing requirements. With the education that has taken place with our shelter supervisor and office manager, I am confident that the mistakes cited in your visit will not happen again.

Sincerely,

Herb McSpadden  
Executive Director