Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the State Auditor
Suzanne M. Bump

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Official Audit Report-Issued December 19, 2013

Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc.

For the period July 1, 2010 through February 15, 2013

State House Room 230 ■ Boston, MA 02133 ■ auditor@sao.state.ma.us ■ www.mass.gov/auditor

December 19, 2013

Mr. Henry Ritter, Chairman
Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc.
5 Stonehouse Lane
Worcester, MA 01609

Dear Chairman Ritter:

I am pleased to provide this performance audit of the Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. This report details the audit objectives, scope, methodology, findings, and recommendations for the audit period, July 1, 2010 through February 15, 2013. During the audit, my staff spoke with agency management about some of the issues presented in this report. However, because of the untimely closure of the agency, my office was unable to provide management with an opportunity to review and comment on our overall report.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. for the cooperation and assistance provided to my staff during the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Chapter 11, Section 12, of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has conducted a performance audit of certain activities of the Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. (the Center) for the period July 1, 2010 through February 15, 2013. The objective of our audit was to review the financial condition and related circumstances of the Center that led to the loss of state contract funding and the closure of the agency.

We found that costs were not sufficiently controlled and Center management did not effectively respond to financial losses it incurred during fiscal year 2004 through fiscal year 2012. As a result of these losses, the Center was in poor financial condition and was operating with accumulated deficits from current operations[1] that at one point approached almost $1 million. Ultimately, state agencies terminated funding effective February 6, 2013[2] and the Center ceased operations on February 15, 2013.

We initiated this audit as a result of concerns the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) had over the Center's fiscal and programmatic administration of its shelter-services[3] contract. DHCD expressed concerns over client management and the Center's billing and accounting practices. Because the Center ceased operating shortly after we began our audit, much of our review of this issue consisted of examining DHCD's program site visit reports (which looked at the Center's client case management, housing services, facility requirements, staffing, recordkeeping, billing, and reporting practices) and discussing with DHCD officials the decision not to renew the Center's contract.

Summary of Findings

We found that management did not effectively respond to financial losses at the Center over the years; ultimately, this resulted in the closure of the agency in February 2013. The specific issues we identified are as follows:

- The Center owed approximately $1 million to suppliers and vendors when it closed, including $235,569 to the Commonwealth for unemployment insurance. The Center did not take the

[1] "Current operations" refers to financial activities reported in the Center's Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Reports that do not include funds used to purchase, maintain, or replace land, buildings, or equipment to house the agency's operations.

[2] DHCD did not renew its contract with the Center when it expired on January 31, 2013.

[3] "Shelter services" refers to transitional housing provided to homeless families and individuals both in shared shelters and in scattered-site apartments.

measures necessary to improve its cash flow and overall financial situation and has been in a deficit position since 2004.

- We identified questionable and nonreimbursable expenses charged to the Commonwealth, including $8,207 of inadequately documented credit-card expenses, $57,080 paid to lease a luxury car for the executive director, at least $39,788 of questionable payments to an affiliated management company for maintenance services, $10,000 to hire a public-relations firm, and $28,700 of interest and late fees.

Recommendations

Under normal circumstances, OSA would provide recommendations to the Center to address any deficiencies identified during our audit. However, since the Center has ceased operating, we recommend that the state's Operational Services Division and the Center's state funding agencies review the amounts that the Center owes to the Commonwealth for unemployment insurance and the nonreimbursable expenses we identified in this report and determine whether any funds are available to repay this debt. If any money is found to be available, the Commonwealth should recover these funds.

OVERVIEW OF AUDITED AGENCY

Background

The Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. (the Center), located in Worcester, Massachusetts, was incorporated on July 1, 1991 as a not-for-profit organization. The Center provided various human and social services throughout central Massachusetts, including shelter, substance-abuse recovery programs, child and adolescent services, developmental services, neighborhood services, and community initiative programs.[4] The Center was licensed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Early Education and Care. During fiscal years 2011 and 2012, the Center received most of its support and revenue from the Commonwealth, as indicated in the following table:

Summary of Revenue

Revenue Source	Fiscal Year 2011	Fiscal Year 2012
Department of Children and Families	$ 5,081,678	$ 5,016,176
Department of Public Health	1,508,087	1,787,168
Department of Housing and Community Development	1,726,444	1,149,645
Department of Developmental Services	622,337	629,462
Purchase of Service Subcontract	2,169,052	1,866,807
Other Revenue	1,288,377	1,452,341
Total Revenue	$12,395,975	$11,901,599

This information was extracted from the Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Reports (UFRs) that the Center filed with the Commonwealth.

According to the financial statements that the Center filed with the Commonwealth,[5] between fiscal year 2004 and fiscal year 2012, the Center experienced financial losses that restricted its ability to operate. During a visit to the Center by DPH in which DPH looked at the financial condition of the Center, it was noted that, as far back as 2009, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as the principal purchasing agency for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), placed the Center in "conditional qualification" status as part of its annual qualification review. This process is performed to minimize financial and administrative risk to the Commonwealth and the people who are served by these agencies and to promote familiarization, and enforce compliance,

4 For a description of services, see Appendix B.

5 Each year, agencies such as the Center that operate social programs and contract with various Commonwealth departments must prepare financial statements called Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Reports and file them electronically with the state's Operational Services Division.

with applicable state and federal regulations. According to EOHHS's Provider Qualification and Audit Resolution Policies and Procedures Reference Guide (the Guide), the conditional-qualification designation identifies agencies that appear to be "not financially and/or administratively qualified to do business with the Commonwealth." Conditional-qualification status is assigned when the principal purchasing agency "identifies serious deficiencies. . . that must be addressed and corrected in order for the provider to continue doing business with the Commonwealth." Examples of serious deficiencies include "significant negative working capital or negative net worth; identification of serious adverse financial trends; serious or repeated internal control or compliance findings." Despite the conditional-qualification status, the Commonwealth continued to purchase services from the Center, which is allowed per the Guide as long as the principal purchasing agency (in this case DCF) determines that "the best interests of the Commonwealth and its clients warrant continued contracting with the provider."

In five of the nine fiscal year-end periods from 2004 through 2012, the Center reported losses resulting in a total net loss of $1,087,610. A contributing factor to the losses was poor management of Willis Social Enterprise Center, Inc. (WSEC)—a for-profit, affiliated corporation of the Center that was established as a property management company to perform building repairs, remodeling, and maintenance for private companies or individuals with the intent of generating additional revenue. Despite these plans, WSEC lost $517,547 in its first two years of operation. After failing to generate revenue working with private companies or individuals, WSEC reduced its operations to maintaining only the Center's sites. WSEC's losses, coupled with continued program losses, placed the Center in a deficit position, with insufficient cash flow.

In 2012, the Center requested and later received from two of its state contracting agencies, DPH and DCF, additional funding totaling approximately $300,000 to help address its cash-flow position. These state agencies provided this additional funding with the understanding (established verbally) that the Center would initiate an internal corrective action plan to increase revenue and decrease expenditures and would seek a merger with another social- and human-service agency to secure permanent financial stability. During May 2012, the Center entered into formal merger discussions with another social- and human-service provider; however, after several months, that provider terminated merger discussions, citing potential financial liability concerns.

The fact that the Center did not meet the conditions under which the additional state funding was provided ultimately led DCF, DPH, and the Department of Developmental Services to terminate all its contracts as of February 6, 2013,[6] resulting in the closure of the Center effective February 15, 2013. The Center's programs and activities were transferred to other social- and human-service agencies, and the Center's real-estate properties were sold in February 2013 to pay off existing mortgages and partially pay off other debts.

[6] DHCD's contracts expired on January 31, 2013 and were not renewed.

AUDIT OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Chapter 11, Section 12, of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Office of the State Auditor has conducted a performance audit of certain activities of the Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. (the Center) for the period July 1, 2010 through February 15, 2013. We extended our audit period when necessary to meet our audit objective: in some instances, it was necessary to conduct audit testing outside the audit period when analyzing factors that contributed to the Center's overall financial condition. We reviewed accounting and program data for the period 2004 through 2012 from the Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Reports (UFRs) that the Center filed with the state's Operational Services Division (OSD). The objective of our audit was to review the financial condition and related circumstances of the Center that led to the loss of state contract funding and the closure of the agency. We initiated this audit as a result of concerns the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) had over the Center's fiscal and programmatic administration of its shelter-services contract. DHCD expressed concerns over client management and the Center's billing and accounting practices. Because the Center ceased operating shortly after we began our audit, much of our review of this issue consisted of examining DHCD's program site visit reports (which looked at the Center's client case management, housing services, facility requirements, staffing, recordkeeping, billing, and reporting practices) and discussing with DHCD officials the decision not to renew the Center's contract.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

To accomplish our objective, we examined the Center's financial records, including pertinent source documents and UFRs. We reviewed the Center's board of directors' meeting minutes, organizational charts, policies and procedures, and internal financial reports and interviewed the Center's chief executive officer and chief financial officer. We also reviewed DHCD's and the Department of Public Health's (DPH's) site review reports and the Center's response to the issues noted during those reviews. We met with representatives from DHCD and DPH to discuss the circumstances surrounding the closing of the Center. We also reviewed three months of credit-card charges to determine whether the supporting documentation was adequate, in response to issues in this area identified by the Center's independent auditors.

When performing our audit, we reviewed accounting records from the Center's internal accounting system, compared the information therein with source documentation such as expenditure and billing invoices, and interviewed knowledgeable Center officials about the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. We examined judgmentally selected samples of expenditures from selected vendors, which were representative of the Center's operations and programs, to determine that expenditures were properly documented and allowable and that they supported the business activities of the Center. Additionally, we randomly selected three months of credit-card expenditures to determine that all expenditures were properly documented. The results of these tests cannot be projected to those populations. Lastly, we performed comparative analysis using the UFR database that OSD maintains. The UFR database is publicly available on the OSD website and is a repository of annual audits conducted by independent public accountants in accordance with OSD requirements and federal requirements. This information is widely accepted as accurate, and we concluded that it was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our audit.

We determined that the following internal controls were relevant to our audit objective:

- Controls over expenditures, including credit-card purchases, with particular emphasis on whether receipts supported expenditures.

Since the agency has closed, recommendations for internal control improvements that would typically be addressed to the Center are omitted from this report. However, our detailed audit results and findings are listed below.

DETAILED AUDIT RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Ineffective management practices and questionable expenditures resulted in the closure of the agency.

Our audit found that ineffective management practices, coupled with the questionable use of thousands of dollars of agency funds, led to the Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. (the Center) experiencing significant cash-flow problems and eventually having to cease its operations. Contrary to generally accepted good business practice, the Center's management did not effectively react on a timely basis to continued losses on program operations or losses being incurred by its consolidated affiliated company, nor did it otherwise improve its overall financial situation despite receiving continued financial support from its state contracting agencies. Finally, two of the Center's state funding agencies indicated that they were concerned about client care issues, such as staffing of certain programs, that the Department of Housing and Community Development had identified during site visits, as well as client safety issues, and the Center's response to the issues, identified during site visits by the Department of Public Health. As a result of its management issues, the Center closed in 2013 with debts to its suppliers and vendors totaling approximately $1 million, including $235,569 of unemployment compensation payments to the Commonwealth.[7]

a. Approximately $1 Million Owed to Suppliers and Vendors

The Center reported losses in five of the nine years between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2012, resulting in a total net loss of $1,087,610. When the Center's contracts were terminated on February 6, 2013, it owed approximately $1 million to suppliers and vendors, including $235,569 of unemployment compensation payments to the Commonwealth.

Because of the Center's poor financial position and related lack of cash, management resorted to paying the most urgent liabilities, such as payroll, first and deferring the payment of other liabilities. When the agency closed, the Center owed $235,569 to the Commonwealth for unemployment insurance, $692,883 to various business vendors, and $89,778 in payroll taxes and other accrued liabilities, according to information provided to us by the Center's audit firm.

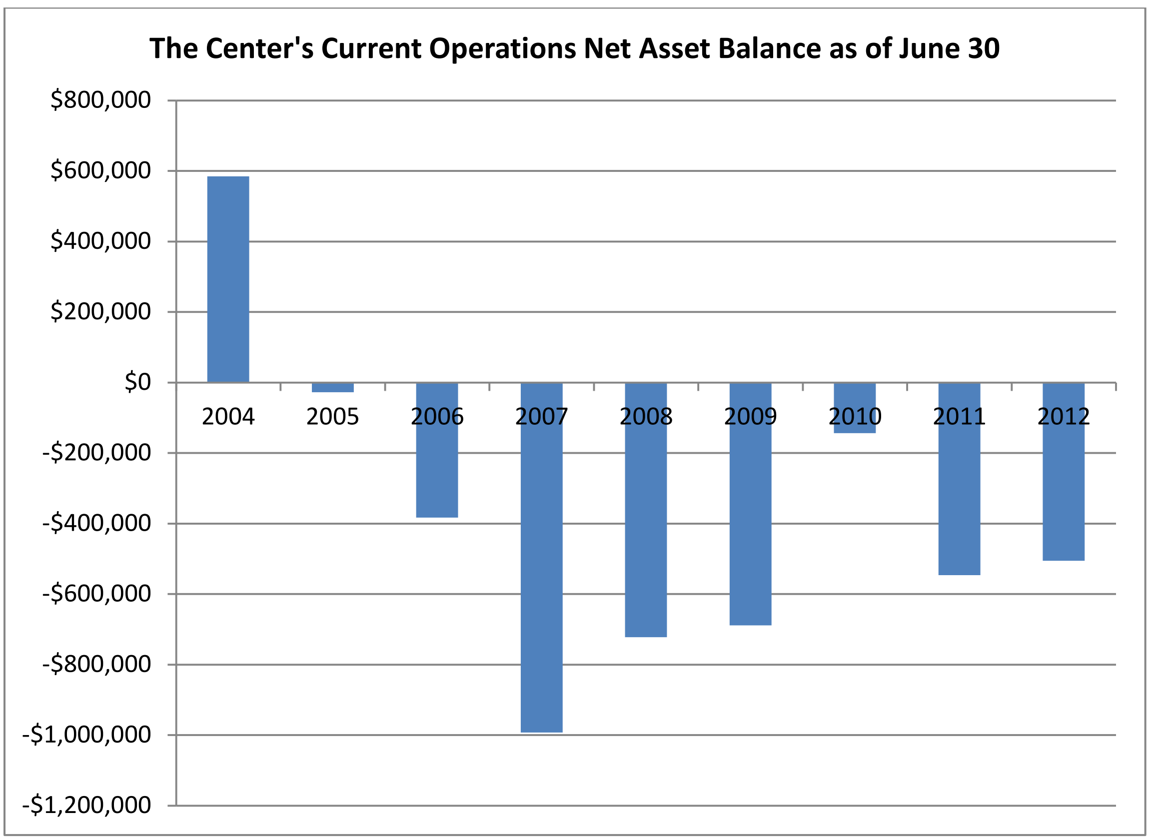
[7] Each month, the Center was charged for the costs associated with unemployment claims filed by its employees who had been laid off. The $235,569 total is the amount owed per the Center's records as of January 31, 2013.

After the termination of the Center's state contracts, the company sold its real-estate holdings for $2.5 million, which had related mortgage notes[8] of $2.2 million. The remaining balance of $300,000 was used to pay some of the organization's outstanding bills, but was not sufficient to pay off all of its outstanding obligations. Additionally, the amounts owed to certain parties, particularly the Commonwealth, continued to increase and amounted to $533,457 as of July 23, 2013 (the latest date for which information was available to us).

i. Results of Untimely Management Adjustment to Operating Losses

According to its financial reports, the Center had been in a poor financial position since 2004, when its expenses first exceeded revenues. The Center operated at a net overall loss and did not effectively reduce its expenses to more closely match its revenues to produce long-term profitability during the period 2004 through 2012.

As a result, the Center's net asset balance from current operations went into a negative position in 2005 and did not exceed $0 at any point through 2012, as shown below.



[8] A mortgage note is a temporary and conditional pledge of property to a creditor as security for the performance of an obligation or the repayment of a debt.

The chart above reflects the Center's yearly current operating results and accumulated deficits. Below are three specific examples of poor management control over expenditures that were major contributors to these poor financial results.

Losses from Mismanagement of an Affiliated For-Profit Property Management Company

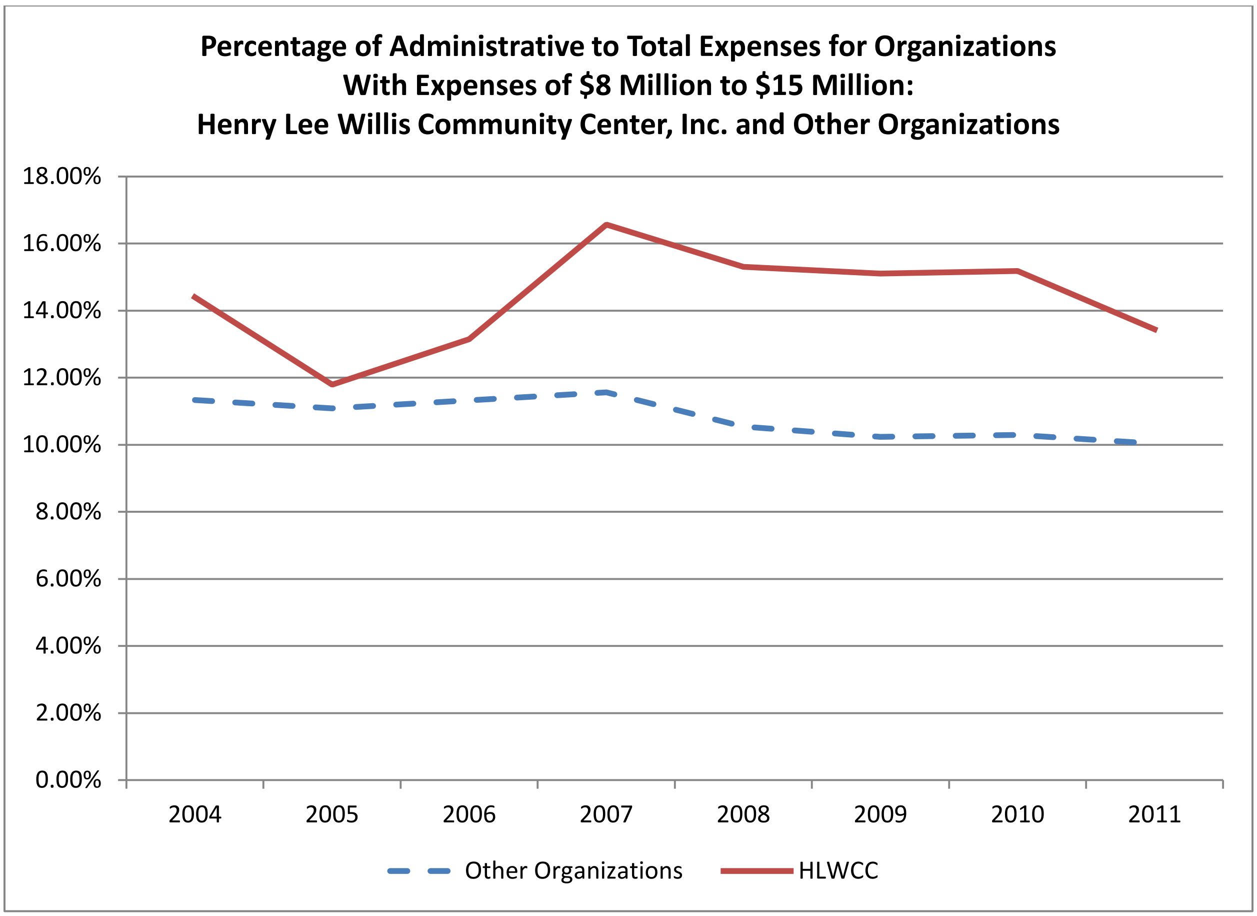
A contributing factor to the net losses and negative net asset balances was mismanagement of a wholly owned subsidiary for-profit company, Willis Social Enterprise Center, Inc. (WSEC). WSEC was established in August 2004 as a property management company that would perform building repair, remodeling, and maintenance for private individuals or other companies and would employ individuals who had been served by Center programs. WSEC received startup money from the Center and presented its annual financial information consolidated with the Center's information in the Center's Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Reports (UFRs). When it was created, the Center's managers thought WSEC would be an additional source of revenue to supplement state funding for the Center, but it appears that the entity did not have sufficient experience in operating such an enterprise, and it lost $517,547 during its first two years in operation. WSEC eventually stopped providing services to outside individuals and companies and reduced its operations to maintaining only the Center's sites. The Center's decision to invest in WSEC ultimately negatively affected the Center's financial position over several years.

Losses from Program Operations

Another factor contributing to losses was the Center's operating programs that were losing money. According to our analysis of the Center's UFR information, the Center operated 36 programs from 2004 through 2012, and 22 of those programs (61%) generated losses, with overall program losses totaling $422,094 during this period. The program that lost the most money was the Center's Outpatient Services Program, which had lost $949,502 since 2004. Although the agency incurred operating losses in many of its programs for over nine years, the Center did not take effective measures to reduce its operating expenses to match its revenues in these programs.

Higher-than-Average Administrative Costs

Using the UFR database, we compared administrative expenses for the Center to those of other, similarly sized organizations that filed UFRs. Since the Center had yearly expenditure activity averaging approximately $11.7 million for the period 2004 through 2011,[9] we compared its expenses to those of other organizations that had total expenses of $8 to $15 million. According to the information reported on its annual UFRs, the Center's administrative costs were 3% higher than those of other, similarly sized organizations that filed UFRs. Because the Center had annual average expenses of about $11 million, this 3% represented approximately $330,000 higher administrative costs per year. It should also be noted that reported administrative expenses for the Center peaked in 2007 at over 16%, which was approximately 5% higher than the percentage for comparable agencies, as shown below.[10]



While the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) recognizes that entities' total administrative costs vary depending on a number of factors, including the nature of the services they provide, we believe that this analysis shows that, in general, administrative costs at the

[9] The analysis goes through 2011 because that was the latest available data when the analysis was conducted.
[10] This analysis also goes through 2011, for the reason stated above.

Center exceeded expected administrative costs for other agencies of its size and should have been more closely monitored and controlled by Center management.

b. Questionable and Nonreimbursable Expenditures Totaling at Least $143,775

During our audit, we reviewed various types of documentation that we were able to obtain from the Center's accounting records for selected expenditures to determine whether they were reasonable and allowable. We found that the Center's private auditing firm had noted issues with credit-card documentation in its management letters for fiscal years 2009 through 2012. Based on this, we randomly selected three months of credit-card purchases for our review. We also reviewed the payments for a luxury vehicle leased for the executive director. Finally, we reviewed the agency's general ledger to determine whether interest or late payments, and payments to an affiliated corporation that the Center charged to its state contracts, were allowable.

i. Inadequately Documented Credit-Card Expenses Totaling $8,207

During our audit, we examined a sample of three months of credit-card expenditures, totaling $21,243, for 188 transactions and found that 110 transactions, totaling $8,207, that the Center charged to its state contracts did not have any supporting documentation to substantiate their business purposes and are therefore nonreimbursable according to Operational Services Division (OSD) regulations.

OSD, the state agency responsible for regulating and overseeing the activities of contracted human-service providers such as the Center, has promulgated 808 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 1.05, with which all contracted human-service organizations must comply. Section 26 of that regulation identifies the following costs as nonreimbursable costs under state contracts:

> *Undocumented Expenses. Costs which are not adequately documented in the light of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants statements on auditing standards for evidential matters.*

ii. Luxury Car for Executive Director Leased for $57,080

From June 2006 through February 2013, the Center paid $57,080 to lease a luxury vehicle for use by its executive director and charged that cost to its state contracts. The vehicle in question was an Audi A6 Quattro All Wheel Drive originally leased in June 2006 for a three-year period. The vehicle had a suggested retail price starting at $44,690 at that time. The original lease was renewed at a monthly cost of $799.90 on September 15, 2009, for a fouryear period ending on September 15, 2013. OSA was not able to document any other operating expenses (e.g., insurance payments, maintenance and repair costs, gasoline) the Center may have paid that were related the executive director's use of this vehicle. In OSA's opinion, it was not fiscally prudent for the Center to use its limited funds in this manner given its poor financial condition.

In addition, under 808 CMR 1.05(23), Luxury Items, the following are nonreimbursable costs under state contracts:

> *All costs associated with luxury items including, but not limited to luxury passenger automobiles as defined in the Internal Revenue Code §§ 4001 or 4002, airplanes, boats, vacation homes, alcoholic beverages, charitable contributions and donations, and all non-Program entertainment expenses.*

iii. Inadequately Documented Maintenance and Repair Services Totaling at Least $39,788 Obtained from an Affiliated Party

According to its accounting records, the Center obtained property maintenance and additional services from its for-profit affiliated party, WSEC, and charged these amounts to state contracts. We were given a copy of an affiliation agreement signed on August 1, 2004, when WSEC was established. The agreement established a rate of $10,000 per month for facility-maintenance services, which include light landscaping, handyman services, regular cleaning, and janitorial services, to be provided by WSEC for the Center. Additional services such as remodeling or construction services were to be billed separately. Based on the agreement, WSEC should only have billed $120,000 per year for maintenance services. However, the Center's general ledger for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 indicated that WSEC billed the Center $144,000 and $135,788 for maintenance services in fiscal years 2011 and 2012, respectively. We were not given any documentation that substantiated the additional $39,788 ($24,000 for fiscal year 2011 and $15,788 for fiscal year 2012) paid to WSEC for maintenance services; therefore, the additional amounts paid were inadequately documented expenses and nonreimbursable according to 808 CMR 1.05(26)—Undocumented Expenses (quoted above). For these reasons, we question whether the payments that the Center made to WSEC for these maintenance services represented allowable expenses under the Center's state contracts.

Additionally, during an examination of WSEC's corporate activities, we reviewed the Massachusetts Secretary of State's corporate filings and found that WSEC had not filed the required annual corporate filings since 2008. In order to legally operate in Massachusetts, corporations such as WSEC are required to file corporate information annually with the Secretary of State's Office. We reviewed records maintained by the Secretary of State's Office and found that, as of June 18, 2012, WSEC was no longer listed as an active corporation within the Commonwealth. WSEC had not filed the required annual reports since 2008 and was eventually, in June 2012, involuntarily dissolved by the Commonwealth.

iv. Non-Program Costs Totaling $10,000 to Pay for a Public-Relations Firm

During a review of agency expenditures, we found that when the Center was notified of contract termination by state funding agencies in December 2012, it hired a public-relations firm and paid it $10,000 as a retainer to help with publicity related to the contract termination.

The 808 CMR 1.05(12) identifies non-program expenses—"expenses of the Contractor which are not directly related to the social service program purposes of the Contractor"—as non-program costs that are nonreimbursable. Based on the non-program nature of this public-relations expense, the cost appears to be nonreimbursable.

v. Interest and Late Fees Totaling $28,700

During our review of the Center's accounting records, we found that the agency paid a total of $20,600 of interest expense and late fees in fiscal years 2011 and 2012 on bills that were overdue. These additional fees and costs were a result of not having sufficient cash available to pay bills. One of the larger amounts paid was to the Commonwealth for late payments of unemployment insurance, totaling $15,684. The remainder was attributable to regular vendor expenses such as telephone and Internet service and electricity.

Also, during fiscal year 2012, we found that the Center paid $8,100 in payroll penalty and interest charges. The Center incurred these charges by not depositing withheld federal taxes within the required timeframe of five days. The deposit was delayed because of the agency's cash-flow problems. The Center should have made timely tax deposits to avoid this penalty.

The 808 CMR 1.05(3)(d) classifies "any interest or penalties incurred because of late payment of loans or other indebtedness, late filing or payment of federal and state tax returns, municipal taxes, unemployment taxes, social security, and the like" as nonreimbursable costs.

Recommendations

Under normal circumstances, OSA would provide recommendations to the Center to address any deficiencies identified during our audit. However, since the Center has ceased operating, we recommend that OSD and the Center's state funding agencies review the amounts that the Center owes to the Commonwealth for unemployment insurance and the nonreimbursable expenses we identified in this report and determine whether any funds are available to repay this debt. If any money is found to be available, the Commonwealth should recover these funds.

APPENDIX A

REPORTS ISSUED BY OVERSIGHT AGENCIES REGARDING THE HENRY LEE WILLIS COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.

Issuer	Document Title	Date Issued
Department of Housing and Community Development	Annual Site Review Report	April 26, 2012
Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services	Fiscal Site Visit Report	December 11, 2012

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS AT THE HENRY LEE WILLIS COMMUNITY CENTER, INC.[11]

Shelter Services

> *"[The Center provided] transitional housing to homeless families and individuals in both* ***congregate shelters*** *and* ***scattered site apartments****. Families [worked] with culturally competent case managers to become financially stable and find their own housing. . . . Staff [connected] residents with healthcare, counseling, parenting classes, and GED classes or vocational training."*

Substance Abuse Recovery Programs

The Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Inc. (the Center) provided help with substance abuse and addiction through treatment options such as outpatient counseling, residential treatment services, and sober house living. The Center "[worked] in partnership with service recipients to create an individually tailored treatment plan to address all the life circumstances that have contributed to drug and alcohol abuse." Treatment plans included both individual and group-based treatment. In addition, the Center provided residential treatment services as well as sober house living for clients who had been sober thirty or more days. Center personnel developed individual plans to give residents the resources and treatment necessary to stay sober. The supportive living environment motivated participants "to work toward a stable, healthy and self-supporting lifestyle."

Child and Adolescent Services

Through these services, the Center

> *[provided] support for families of children with emotional disturbances, [placed] children in loving homes with foster parents, and operated [a residential home] for adolescent boys. . . . The Family Care foster child placement program [was] an intensive program that [provided] the necessary support for children and families to ensure that children with a history of abuse and neglect [could] begin to heal in a loving and stable home.*

The home for adolescent boys was

> *a residential program serving adolescent boys 12 – 18 who [had been] removed from their homes by the State. . . . Boys [left] the program when they [had] made enough progress to move back home or enter a foster care program. While the boys [were in the program], their families [engaged] in therapy through the Department of Children and Families. . . .*

[11] Unless otherwise indicated, quotations in this appendix were taken from the Center's now-defunct website, previously at www.williscenter.org.

Finally, the Families and Communities Together program "[helped] families to identify and use their natural and community supports as well as health and social services to create a holistic support system to provide care and treatment for children and meet the needs of families."

Development Services

Through this program, the Center helped individuals with cognitive disabilities lead safe and independent lives:

> *The client-centered programs [focused] on case management staff, service recipients, and their families working together to help service recipients be happy and engaged in their lives and the community. . . . Developmental Service recipients [achieved] life successes such as taking college classes, connecting with their community, moving into independent housing, finding a job, purchasing a car, taking care of their own children, or moving into their own apartment.*[12]

Neighborhood Services

The Center

> *operated two neighborhood centers with food pantries which [targeted] the high level of poverty and increasing need for food aid in Worcester. Families [depended] on the Willis Center pantries in Great Brook Valley and Plumley Village for emergency food, clothing and referrals to other social services that improve the quality of life for adults and children alike. . . . At the first visit to the Neighborhood Centers, families and individuals [were] paired up with culturally competent case managers who facilitate the enrollment in government assistance programs and make referrals to other essential [services].*

Services included help with applying for food stamps and other food assistance, job searches, rent, and utility payments.

Community Initiatives

> *[The Center's] Office for Racial and Economic Equity [was] engaged in the community through organizing and advocacy initiatives. . . . Community mobilization [was] aimed at increasing access to resources that [enabled] disadvantaged community members to live healthy lives. [The Center] provided leadership and support that [allowed] community partners to build capacity to address community needs.*

The Center was involved in six initiatives: the Worcester Opioid Overdose Prevention Coalition, Black Unity, the Worcester Partnership for Racial and Health Equity, Black Legacy, the Worcester Violence Prevention Coalition, and the Social Justice Roundtable. The Center was also involved in the African-American and Juneteenth Festival held each year in Worcester "to celebrate and to honor the vital role of African Americans in US history and in current times."[13]

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[12] Source: Willis Center Annual Report FY 2010.
[13] Source: Willis Center Annual Report FY 2010.