



statewide
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SWAN PRIME CONTRACT MANAGEMENT
DIAKON LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
FAMILY DESIGN RESOURCES

Administrative Update

2012 SUMMER STATEWIDE MEETING

TA Collaborative and Concurrent Planning—a new partnership

The newly-named TA Collaborative is a cohesive group of technical assistance, TA, providers who work in collaboration with county children and youth agencies, CCYA, to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The recent Concurrent Planning Bulletin references this TA, making it the first formal implementation of delivering collaborative efforts for TA in Pennsylvania's child welfare system.

By July 1, 2013 CCYA will need to conduct an organizational self study to review their concurrent planning policies and practices. The new requirement for formal concurrent planning applies to all dependent children in out of home placements. The bulletin specifies that TA is available at no charge through Pennsylvania's TA Collaborative.

The intention of the TA Collaborative is to streamline the TA so a county may hold fewer on site meetings and more efficiently meet its TA needs. CCYAs may request assistance with their organizational self assessment and with incorporating the eight core components of concurrent planning by contacting any of the TA Collaborative partners. Some of the partners are the Office of Children, Youth and Families, OCYF, Regional Office; the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network, SWAN; the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource

Center, CWRC; the Administrative Office of PA Courts, AOPC, and the American Bar Association Barriers to Permanency Project.

For SWAN, the TA will come from the regional technical assistants, SWAN Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, PAE, coordinators, and SWAN Legal Services Initiative, LSI, coordinators working in collaboration with the other TA providers. In some counties a site visit could include the SWAN TA, a SWAN LSI paralegal, the CWRC practice improvement specialist, a SWAN PAE coordinator and the AOPC judicial analyst to assist in the assessment of that county's status to practice concurrent planning. SWAN LSI paralegals in many counties may be part in their county's assessment process and will help develop and document existing court procedures as part of the response to this bulletin.

The SWAN prime contract looks forward to enhancing TA for concurrent planning to the counties. If a county is interested in requesting support from the TA Collaborative they may contact their SWAN regional TA, or the county may contact one of the co-chairs for the TA Collaborative Steering Committee – currently Mary Ann Daniels, Erie County C&Y administrator at mdaniels@eriecountydhs.org or Mike Byers at mib39@pitt.edu.

Special Points of Interest:

- Concurrent planning meets technical assistance
- SWAN TAs, coordinators, paralegals all get involved

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New benchmark revisions are soon ready

After two years of diligent work by the network, prime contractor and the Department of Public Welfare, the new SWAN benchmarks are ready to be forwarded to the OCYF for final approval.

The program division of the prime contractor is putting finishing touches on the Child Profile, Child Preparation, Child Specific Recruitment,

Family Profile, Finalization and Placement benchmarks and hopes to have them to OCYF by the end of July. These benchmarks were reviewed by both affiliates and counties.

Once these benchmarks are approved, they will then be uploaded to the portal and be available to affiliates to use for

each referred unit of service. The post-permanency benchmarks are still being reviewed by the network, and we hope to be finished with those by early fall. Thanks to everyone who was part of this process.

The next unit of service meeting is planned for September.

Children who found permanency

During the just-ended fiscal year 2011-12 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012), 965 finalization units of SWAN services were completed. The highest monthly number of 136 came in March 2012.

SWAN finalization services are used for all ages of children from birth through age 18. Here are some of the highlights for finalizations through the SWAN prime contract.

- 92 teenagers were finalized during fiscal year 2011-12. This number represents 9.5% of all children finalized during this fiscal year.

- The goal of the network is to get children to permanency more quickly. Because of the success of that work, the average age of children for whom the finalization unit of service is used continues to get younger. A total of 537 children, or 55% of those finalized through SWAN, were age 0–5.
- Children aged 6–12 represented 35.4% of all those finalized with 345 finalizations.

The ultimate work of SWAN is to create and strengthen families. The

importance of that family bond, especially for our children, is described in this quote from Phil McGraw in *Family First*, “There is an interconnectedness among members that bonds the family, much like mountain climbers who rope themselves together when climbing a mountain, so that if someone should slip or need support, he's held up by the others until he regains his footing.”

Thank you for the great work you do each day to create families and build supports.

2012 Summer Statewide Meeting

Act 101 Overview training now online!

OCYF has worked in cooperation with the CWRC and the prime contractor for SWAN to develop a web link for a standardized training course on the Overview of Act 101. That training is now available.

This online approach saves staff time and reduces costs for those who need to attend training courses, as well as reducing costs to the Commonwealth when providing ongoing and standardized training. Many have already accessed the *Act 101 Overview Training Course* from their office or home computer. You may also revisit the online training to review any of the three areas of

Act 101 whenever you wish.

To participate, you must have a username and password to gain entry to the CWRC's E-Learn site. To obtain this access, please email cwtpreg@pitt.edu to check whether or not you are currently in the CWRC's Encompass system. Encompass tracks the individuals who are trained and the courses they have completed.

A login process is needed by all who take the course. Before starting the course, trainees will receive an email from the CWRC that contains the sign-in

credentials for access to the course.

If you are not already in the Encompass system, you will need to complete a demographic form that will be emailed for you to complete and submit.

If you are already in the Encompass system, CWRC will reply to your request to take the course with your credentials for login.

LSI Plans Another Expansion

The new fiscal year 2012-13 finds the SWAN LSI program preparing for another potential expansion. This expansion provides for an additional 23 paralegal positions throughout Pennsylvania and brings the LSI paralegal total to 134 paralegals supporting 62 existing counties. This will be a truly remarkable accomplishment, allowing the SWAN LSI program to further support expediting

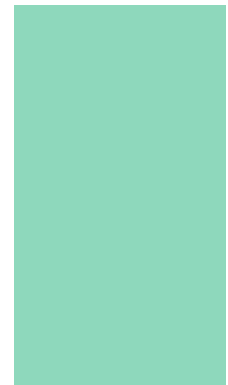
permanency for our waiting children.

SWAN's legal training department is continuing to offer the "*Conquering the Courtroom*" training to support counties in preparing their caseworkers for court. This unique training covers everything from courtroom basics, to caseworker anxiety and preparation, culminating in practice testimony.

The training is a nine hour training, which is

delivered as three half-day sessions or a one and a half day session. This training opportunity is still available.

If your county is interested in requesting the *Conquering the Courtroom* training, please contact your SWAN LSI coordinator today!



Administrative Update—2012 Summer Statewide Meeting

SWAN Portal Update

Much time and energy has gone into refining the functionality of the SWAN portal. The goal of this work is to make sure that the SWAN portal is a resource to our network and that we continue to offer solutions to providers of child and family services.

During 2012 many new enhancements will be integrated into the portal. For example, for each child and family record, agencies will be able to view a summary screen, which will streamline access to current and historical information. Submitting new forms or updating existing forms will become faster and more efficient, requiring fewer steps and will be more intuitive to the user. Additionally, the overall system performance will be faster, the *Forget Password* feature will operate more effectively, and the *Return*

to Previous and *Cancel* buttons will operate as originally designed.

When we are ready to install these enhancements, the portal will need to be taken offline. As this will disrupt work in the network, Diakon/FDR will be sure to provide advance notification about when this will occur, as well as direction about how to minimize the disruption. We will also provide more detailed information about what is changing. Finally, before the enhancements are installed, you will have resources to help you navigate the new features.

We are excited to offer updates and enhancements to our SWAN portal users. Thank you for your continued patience and cooperation, and please stay tuned!

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