



**statewide
adoption and
permanency
network**

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

Administrative Update

2012 SPRING QUARTERLY MEETING

Guess who's turning 20?

Come celebrate our 20th birthday! It is hard to believe the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network is turning 20 this year! A major part of this birthday celebration occurs at the upcoming SWAN/IL Permanency Conference on July 18-20, 2012. Over the past 20 years the conference has grown from less than 200 attendees to over 700. But more importantly we have **assisted in placing nearly 32,000 children in permanent homes!**

In 2005 SWAN partnered with Pennsylvania's Independent Living Services, IL. IL's presence has helped to increase attendance at the Permanency Conference and changed the face of the conference as well. IL encouraged us to keep focused on the youth in care who are aging out of the system and who need our help to find permanent resources as they move into adulthood.

This year the SWAN/IL Permanency Conference will be better than ever, with 48 scheduled workshops on topics ranging from assisting youth in care, parenting, concurrent planning, legal issues, child preparation, trans-racial adoption and mental health services.

SWAN Portal Work Continues

Work to refine the SWAN portal continues. The prime contractor's goal is to assure that the SWAN portal is a resource to our network and that we continue to offer solutions to providers of child and family services.

Currently we are working on enhancements to be offered through the SWAN portal. For example, for each child and family record, agencies will be able to view a child or family summary screen, streamlining access to current and historic information. Submitting new forms or updating existing forms will become more efficient and more intuitive to the user. Additionally, 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.

The opening keynote session will profile the stories of older youth in Pennsylvania. A panel of youth and young adults will speak about their experiences in the Pennsylvania child welfare system. They will share stories about their challenges and successes while in care and as they transition out of child welfare and will tell us about their future plans while challenging us to "never give up on the children and youth who enter our system."

Becky Wright is the closing keynote. Ms. Wright is an experienced presenter, vocalist and adoptive mother. She will be bringing her voice as well as her experience to all participants, but especially to families as we close our time together. As always, we will hear from our children and youth who attended the conference and see how this experience has impacted them.

So come celebrate with us as we begin our third decade in service to children and families. Work with us as we reach toward 40,000 adoptions. You won't want to miss it!

Special Points of Interest:

**SWAN / IL
Conference is
July 18-20**

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National registration is automatic

Children who have had termination of parental rights, TPR, and are registered on the adoptuskids website are automatically registered on the national adoptuskids website.

Periodically, coordinators from the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, PAE, get requests from counties asking that their children not be placed on the adoptuskids website because they are not looking to place the child outside of Pennsylvania. If the child has a goal of adoption, **not** considering an out of state family for that child is not an option.

The Pennsylvania Adoption Act requires county agencies to register all children with PAE “for whom parental rights

have been terminated for 90 days and for whom no report of intention to adopt has been filed in the court of common pleas” (Title 23 Pa. C.S.A., Chapter 25 § 2553). Additionally, the Adoption Act charges PAE with the “coordination of its functions with other state, regional and national adoption exchanges” (Title 23 Pa. C.S.A., Chapter 25 § 2554).

To comply with the requirements of the Adoption Act, Pennsylvania cooperates with other national exchanges, including and not limited to AdoptUSKids. As noted on the Child Registration Form (CY130), all children whose parental rights have been terminated and who are registered with

PAE will also be registered with AdoptUSKids.

This policy is supported by the recent Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act (P.L. 109-239), which requires that interstate placement options are to be considered at all steps of court permanency proceedings. The federal act amended the Title IV-B and IV-E plans by modifying the existing definition of “case plan” in section 475 (1) (E) of the Social Security Act to “clarify that adoption and other permanency plan recruitment efforts include the use of state, regional and national adoption exchanges and electronic exchange systems to facilitate orderly and timely in-state and interstate placements.”

Coming soon! Act 101 web-based trainings

Coming soon to a computer near you—the new, web-based two-hour Act 101 Overview training will be available to counties, SWAN affiliates, courts and private licensed adoption providers. The training covers all three areas of the Act 101 regulations, including the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry, PAIR; release and access to records; and voluntary post-adoption contact agreements. You may train on any or all of these three sections of Act 101.

Some agencies may have already established agency policy and procedures to implement the steps outlined in the Act 101 law and bulletin. However, if your agency is still working on implementation, the overview is very helpful and informative and can be a useful tool to train new staff or to focus on a specific area of implementation.

You will be able to sign up for this training in one of two ways:

- Visit the SWAN website and select Links to reach

the E-LEARN link to sign up.

- Use this link <http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/ELEARN.htm>. Registration for the e-learning site is free, and a certificate of training will be provided if needed. If you do not already have a login and password, you can sign up and will receive login information within one business day.

Please contact your SWAN LSI coordinator or regional technical assistant for additional information.

More web-based trainings

SWAN's Child Profile and Child Preparation web-based trainings are also available to the network. The SWAN-Spaulling Child Profile and Child Preparation trainings are located at www.swan-online.org and can be used by any county or affiliate in the SWAN network.

Many agencies use these interactive trainings to educate their staff on best practices for writing child profiles, preparing children, and for basic topics in permanency. The trainings can further enhance the training models agencies use with new staff and are valuable refresher courses for those already working in the field.

In addition to these two existing trainings, the SWAN prime contractor is currently finishing a SWAN-Spaulling Post-permanency services training, which will take about eight hours to complete and covers an in-depth look at all the units of Post-permanency. If you have any questions about this training, please see your regional technical assistant.

2012 Spring Quarterly Meeting

Diligent Search—Not just for counties

Affiliates: do you know the SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet is not just for counties? Affiliates can also make good use of the information and tools outlined in the DS Packet to help expand the resources available to you in your efforts to locate family members and information for a child. The DS Packet can also be used to support workers with the SWAN units of service, such as child specific recruitment.

As we all know, an effective diligent search is an ongoing process. With statewide initiatives focusing on Family Group Decision Making, Fostering Connections and Act 101, “diligent searching” is more critical now than ever.

The SWAN LSI program continues to encourage agencies to start their searches as early as possible and continue them through the life of a child’s case. Struggling against some of the “diligent” search efforts currently in practice statewide, LSI reminds agencies that simply generating an Accurint report is not completing a diligent search. LSI strongly encourages all county and affiliate agencies to use the tools provided in SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet to ensure that all possible resources are exhausted.

The SWAN LSI Diligent Search Committee is currently updating the 2010 edition of the packet and hopes to

release the 2012 edition this summer. Until then, the current version of the Diligent Search Packet is available to county and affiliate agencies at the SWAN website. Visit the Legal Services Initiative page at www.diakon-swan.org to download and print a copy of the current edition.

If you have questions or need assistance with a particularly difficult search request, please remember to send your request to the LSI Warmline – lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org – attention LSI DS Committee.

Update on Benchmark revisions

Over the past year the Units of Service meetings for affiliate agencies have reviewed and updated the SWAN Benchmarks. Along with the affiliate input, counties have given feedback through the Continuous Quality Improvement, CQI, meetings and SWAN’s quarterly and statewide meetings.

As a result, great progress was made to create a new set of benchmarks that more accurately reflects current

practice. Currently, benchmarks for Child Preparation and Child Specific Recruitment are completed and ready to be reviewed by the state. In addition, the new Child Profile benchmarks are now ready to be reviewed by the county CQI committee.

Placement benchmarks were reviewed by the U.S. meeting and the CQI committee, and those suggested changes are being incorporated into the benchmarks, which will then

also be submitted to the state for approval. Changes to the Finalization and Family Profile benchmarks are still being reviewed in the U.S. meeting, and we hope to finish that review at the May 8 session. Also underway are reviews of the Post-permanency benchmarks. Most of those have been reviewed within the U.S. meeting, and they should be ready to go to the CQI meetings within the next few months.

Finalizations in FY 2011-12

One hundred sixty-five children received SWAN finalization services in January, February and March (through March 9), bringing the total number of children who received the Finalization unit of service to 663 for fiscal year 2011-12. SWAN Finalization services are used for children of all ages who are in the care and custody of their county children and youth agency.

The following are some of the highlights:

- 663 Finalization services provided by SWAN represent 83 percent of the 802 finalizations reported on the CY 890 in fiscal year 2011 - 12.
- 56 teenagers found permanent homes through SWAN during FY 2011/12. This represents 8.4 percent

of all children finalized through SWAN prime contract.

- 617, or 58 percent, of those who received Finalization services were between age zero and five and 197, or 18 percent of those finalized through the SWAN prime contract, were age ten or older.

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