



**statewide
adoption and
permanency
network**

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

Administrative Update

2012 WINTER STATEWIDE MEETING

Best New Year Wishes...and a Reminder

Best wishes to all our network partners in 2012!! If you are new to the SWAN/IL Winter Statewide meeting - welcome. If you have attended regularly - thank you. We want to take a few minutes to remind everyone of the scope of the contract. The SWAN prime contractor, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, works in partnership with Family Design Resources to manage the contract and the many programs that make up the prime contract. Those programs include:

- SWAN NBB referrals, which are county-requested services, and post-permanency services that are family-requested;
- Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, which includes the CY130, CY131 and CY890 forms for child and family registries; the Resource Family Registry; and the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry, PAIR, where birth and adoptive families archive information for future reference and Act 101 requests;
- Legal Services Initiative, LSI, program that includes standardized training of paralegals placed in 64 county child welfare offices where they assist with legal activities of permanency and a legal Warmline for anyone to call or email legal questions;

- SWAN portal that is currently being finalized to create a single record system for all who visit and complete work in the portal;
- Conferencing services to plan and present meetings around the state and a conference like this one each year;
- Training on and technical assistance on permanency and adoption practice driven by the ongoing unit of service reviews.

Besides the 80 SWAN affiliate contracts, the prime contract also holds or assists with several other subcontracts - the SWAN Helpline, Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association, Older Child Matching Initiative, Adoption Legal Services Program and the American Bar Association Permanency Barriers Project.

A critical and successful collaboration began in 2005 when the SWAN prime contract joined with Independent Living to provide joint meetings to the network. Children served by the prime contract include the older Independent Living youth so both programs must stay informed and connected to assure all services are made available to all qualifying youth. The result is that all children and youth have more opportunity to achieve the highest level of permanency possible as soon as possible and enjoy the benefits of IL.

Special Points of Interest:

- SWAN programs and subcontracts
- Technical assistance
- Training

Updates to the SWAN Portal Coming Soon

We are excited to announce that early in 2012 many enhancements will be made to the SWAN portal. For example, for each child and family record, agencies will soon be able to view a child or family summary screen, streamlining access to both 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.

In 2010 and in 2011 much time and energy was spent refining functionality within the SWAN portal. The prime contractor's goal is to assure the SWAN portal is a resource to our network and that we continue to offer solutions to providers of child and family services.

To install these enhancements the SWAN portal will need to be taken offline for a full week. Recognizing that this will be disruptive to the network, Diakon/

FDR will be sure to provide you with plenty of notice about when this will occur and what you should do to minimize the disruption. We will also soon provide more detailed information about what is changing. Finally, we will provide resources to help you navigate the SWAN portal's new features.

We are excited to offer updates and enhancements to our SWAN portal users. Thank you for your patience as we have navigated this transition and please, stay tuned.

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Conquering the Courtroom!

SWAN's Legal Training Department created the "Conquering the Courtroom" training to help counties prepare their caseworkers for court.

The training is nine hours long, which is delivered as three half-day sessions or in a day and a half. A pre-training consultation is also provided to requesting counties. The

SWAN legal training specialists, coordinators and paralegals have so far delivered this training 16 times in nine counties since September 2011.

This unique training covers everything from courtroom basics, to caseworker anxiety and preparation, and culminates in testimony practice. The training has

been well received by participants, and the prime contractor has received positive feedback from the counties, too.

If your county is interested in receiving the "Conquering the Courtroom" training, please contact your LSI coordinator today!

Finalization Report

In the federal fiscal year October 2010 through September 2011, 1,213 children received the SWAN finalization unit of service, which is 60% of all finalizations (2,013) in the state during that same period.

SWAN finalization services are used for children of all ages who are in the care and custody of their county children and youth agency.

Here are some of the highlights for this past year:

- Older children continue to be finalized through this unit of service. Children in the older age groups accounted for 7.7% (N=179) of all children finalized during 2011, while 211 in the same age group were finalized in 2010 (N=211).

- Children age 0-5 represent a large percentage of the children finalized. In 2010, 695 children or 52% were in this age group, a percentage that increased to 59% in 2011.
- Overall, the percentage of completed finalization units increased 155% from five years earlier, calendar year 2006 vs. 2011 (N=664 and 1,027).

Next US Meeting to Focus on Post-Permanency

The next US or Unit of Service meeting will be held February 23, 2012 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the office of the SWAN prime contractor, 471 JPLwick Drive, Harrisburg.

The next meeting is for Post-Permanency providers only, and participants will continue their review of the Post-Permanency benchmarks.

US meetings are held quarterly for SWAN affiliate agencies to meet and discuss issues and concerns about practice.

Invitations and information about how to register for this event will soon be made available. Watch your email for the notification!

2012 Winter Statewide Meeting

Benchmark Updates

SWAN benchmark revisions have been happening over the past year. Don't miss your chance to give feedback to this process!

In order to better reflect the current practice that is happening across the state, the SWAN benchmarks are being updated and made more current. These revisions are being done to all units of service and involve the network on several levels. The first round of revisions

occur in the Units of Service meetings, which are attended by SWAN affiliates. After several sessions of feedback, the updated benchmarks are then reviewed by a Continuous Quality Initiative, CQI, group, which consists of counties from across the network.

Each updated benchmark is presented at a SWAN Quarterly or Statewide meeting and is reviewed by both affiliates and counties simultaneously. Finally the

state receives all of the feedback and issues the updated version. We encourage all of the network to become involved in this process, either through the CQI, Units of Service meetings, or the Quarterly meetings. It is important these benchmarks reflect practice through the entire statewide network!

Visit us at

www.diakon-swan.org

SWAN Prime Contract Program Trainings

Over the past four months, the SWAN prime contract Program Department has offered a variety of trainings that have focused on the units of service, as well as on specific topics requested by the network. Over the fall months the Program Division offered three different child preparation trainings. One emphasized the use of Child

Preparation with older youth. Two Family Profile trainings occurred, one in the southeast and one in the central region.

The central region's training examined the use of behavioral questioning in the family profile process and how this technique can improve outcomes. More trainings on these topics are currently in

the works and will be announced when plans are finalized.

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