

administrative *update*

Spring 2015 SWAN/ IL Summer Statewide Meeting
SWAN Prime Contract—www.diakon-swan.org

SWAN service referrals should continue

While the end of fiscal year 2014-2015 quickly approaches, some Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) needs based budget (NBB) dollars from this fiscal year are not yet spent. We encourage counties to continue to make referrals for children and families who need services.

For referrals to be applied to the FY 2014-2015 NBB, counties must submit referrals to the SWAN prime contractor by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. Any referral received after this cut-off time will be held and then processed in FY 2015-2016.

If your county has exhausted its SWAN FY 2014-2015 NBB dollars, do not stop referring. The Department of Human Services has authorized reallocation of these funds among counties so the use of these dollars can be maximized. The SWAN prime contractor will continue to process referrals received for FY 2014-2015 until the NBB dollars are exhausted.

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SWAN affiliate contracts extended

The Department of Human Services issued a 90-day contract extension of the SWAN prime contract effective July 1, 2015. Thus, affiliate contracts will be extended as well, subject to the terms and conditions of the original *Purchase of Affiliate Services Agreement*.

Affiliate contract extensions are being distributed now. Please respond to the extensions as soon as they are received. Diakon will continue to process service referrals but will not reimburse for services referred on or after July 1, 2015 until the contract extensions are signed and received.

Diakon/FDR is pleased to continue services to the network.

Coming—new SWAN permanency toolkit

Have you ever wished you could go to just one place to learn about the SWAN units of service, find templates and guidelines, look up relevant laws and bulletins, find information on adoption subsidy, Interstate Compact or just about anything else you need to know about permanency in Pennsylvania?

The SWAN prime contractor is pleased to announce the upcoming release of the SWAN Permanency Toolkit. The “toolkit” is a resource guide about adoption and permanency as practiced by the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network. In the toolkit you will find information about all aspects of permanency, including the history of SWAN, the SWAN units of service and different initiatives in Pennsylvania and permanency practice.

You will be able to access benchmarks, find statistics about children in care or read about the core issues in adoption. Extensive (continued on page 3)



Meet the SWAN Helpline

2015 Summer Statewide Meeting

June 23-24—Lancaster

23rd Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

June 24-26—Lancaster

For support to retain and nurture resource families, visit:

<http://www.diakon-swan.org/seamlessystem/>

The SWAN Helpline speaks to families who are seeking information on adoption, foster care, post-permanency services, waiting children registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, among others. The Helpline can be reached at (800) 585-7926 (SWAN) or by email at swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org.

The SWAN Helpline is staffed by four SWAN technical specialists: Jennifer Bornman, Melissa Buhay and Lynette Lemke and SWAN Helpline Supervisor Tonya Hottenstein.

Jan Scherer has worked for the SWAN Helpline 16 years. Before joining the Helpline, she worked with children with dual diagnoses, intellectual disabilities, mental health and head injury. Jan especially enjoys connecting with families who are just starting the process to become approved for adoption. She gets great satisfaction when following up with a family and learns they are moving forward with the adoption process. She takes pride in feeling she may have influenced a family to go through the SWAN process and adopt a child.

Jennifer Bornman has worked for the SWAN Helpline for 11 years. She loves talking to families, especially those seeking post-permanency services. Jen has spent many hours interacting with families who are going through difficult times and feels gratified when she follows up with those families and finds they received the help they desperately needed. She likes being a part of that process.

Melissa Buhay has been with the SWAN Helpline for three and a half years. Melissa and her brother were adopted as older children through SWAN. She especially enjoys the "Seamless System" calls when she can help families get matched with a child. Melissa takes pride in being a part of successful SWAN matches.

Lynette Lemke is our newest SWAN Helpline staff and has been with the Helpline for just under a year. Originally from Michigan, Lynette moved to Pennsylvania 11 years ago. Her experience includes working with and helping families and foster children through art therapy. She is a passionate and persistent advocate for those with disabilities and especially likes to talk to and assist families from diverse backgrounds and also out of state families.

Tonya Hottenstein has worked for SWAN Helpline for 13 years. She is stepmom to a nine-year-old special needs (autistic) adopted son and a six-year-old daughter. She is passionate about the relationship and trust building the SWAN Helpline does with families. Tonya enjoys the continued contact with a family and being able to support them as they journey through the adoption and permanency process. She enjoys being able to help families navigate the process and get the assistance they need.



Helpline staff L-R: Seated, Tonya Hottenstein, Jennifer Bornman. Standing, Melissa Buhay, Lynette Lemke, Jan Scherer.

Concurrent goal requirements and update

Effective July 1, 2015 the Concurrent Planning Policy and Implementation Bulletin mandates that **all children entering foster care with a goal of reunification** must have a concurrent goal identified for them. In addition, effective January 1, 2016, **all children who were already in out of home care** must have a concurrent goal, regardless of their court-ordered permanency goal. As you are aware, the SWAN portal currently allows entry of both the primary and concurrent goals and the goal dates.

Please note that unlike the primary goal, which is court-ordered, the concurrent goal is not required to be court-ordered. Thus, the concurrent goal and date that is entered can be determined by the county or be the court-ordered date whenever that is established.

The network will be notified as the child form instructions will soon be updated related to the "Court-ordered Date," for concurrent goal.

If you have any questions about the implementation of these changes, please contact your regional technical assistant.

New SWAN template under development

As part of the ongoing revisions to update and improve the SWAN templates, the SWAN prime contractor is developing a template and guidelines for completing the Finalization Supervisory Report.

This new template is being created based on feedback from the network during unit of service meetings and site visits. The template will provide a format to complete the report as outlined in Attachment H, Supervisory Reports from the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network bulletin. The guidelines will outline specific topics to address under each of the headings in Attachment H.

The new template will also complement the work that is being completed on the SWAN Individual Permanency Support Plan (IPSP). When finalized, these forms will be available at www.diakon-swan.org and will be available as part of the benchmarks.

New SWAN Toolkit

(continued from page 1) information about the SWAN Legal Services Initiative, Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, Helpline and Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association will be included. The toolkit will be a user friendly resource that, when fully functional, will offer sharing opportunities, including chat forums.

Finalization update

During the third quarter of fiscal year 2014-2015 (January-March 2015), 228 children, including 30 older children (ages 13-21), completed the SWAN adoption finalization service. For children making the transition from foster care to the permanency option selected for them, Child Preparation is offered through the SWAN program. The collaboration of SWAN and the Independent Living (IL) Program encourages the use of Child Preparation to ensure older youth are better able to make connections.

- In each year since 2010, more than 900 children aged 13 or older completed Child Preparation.
- In the most recent quarter, 423 children aged 13 or older started Child Preparation.

JIFF Implementation Update

At the May Post-Permanency Units of Service (US) meetings, affiliates were kept up-to-date with the implementation of the Juvenile Inventory for Functioning (JIFF), which will be used to complement the current Post-Permanency assessment tools. Use of the JIFF will become effective by the end of August 2015, and the SWAN portal will be updated to include the application.

The computer-based JIFF is an interactive tool that will be used with youth aged 11 and older. Whenever the JIFF assessment is put into service, the Child and Adolescent Functional Scale (CAFAS) and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale (FACESIII) need not be used.

An email will be sent to the Post-Permanency key contacts in the near future, asking them to identify staff that will be using the JIFF. Please be on the lookout for this email.

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