

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

From the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)
Department of Human Services

OCYF Staff Update

OCYF is proud to announce that **Jonathan (Jon) Rubin** joined DHS as the OCYF Deputy Secretary in November 2019, and **Amanda Dorris** joined as the Director of the Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations in September 2019.

Jon led the Bucks County Housing and Human Services Division since 2014, overseeing the county's child welfare agency, behavioral and developmental health programs, drug and alcohol services, mental health and developmental programs, housing services, and Area Agency on Aging. As director, Jon focused on creating a more integrated approach to housing and human services work, encouraging two-generation, whole-family focuses and facilitating public-private partnerships and generative program development. Jon began his career with the Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services Agency as a social worker first and eventually as a child protective services manager for four years. He also worked to strengthen the child welfare system on a state level in positions with the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, providing technical assistance and training to children and youth agencies around Pennsylvania, and later with Deloitte as a senior consultant and child welfare subject matter expert, helping implement the Child Welfare Information Solution project. Jon also worked at the national level supporting child welfare systems across the country when he served as an organizational effectiveness consultant for the American Public Human Services Association.

Amanda's career has been dedicated to helping others and the provision of quality services since entering the field of human services following her graduation from Shippensburg University with a degree in criminal justice and concentration in juvenile justice. Amanda started her career as a therapeutic staff support for youth in 2002, and then worked as a counselor in a residential setting for adjudicated female youth for another two years. She began working for the Commonwealth in 2005 in the Office of Child Development and

Early Learning, Bureau of Certification Services, Division of Regulatory Administration where she managed policy, procedures and enforcement relating to certified child care facilities in Pennsylvania. In 2014, Amanda joined OCYF in the Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS) as the Director of the Policy, Program Staff Development Unit, and became the Director of the BJJS Juvenile Court Services Unit in 2016.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Pennsylvania continues to work towards implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) by October 1, 2020. To guide the work, a governance structure was adopted that includes multiple workgroups comprised of stakeholders from across the Commonwealth. These workgroups are charged with providing recommendations to support the federal reimbursement of certain evidence-based programs and services that maintain the unity of families and enhance the quality of services in congregate care settings designed to treat the unique needs of children and youth. In December 2019, OCYF and Casey Family Programs hosted three PA Puts Families First convenings for county stakeholder teams that focused on the objectives of understanding the family first legislation, development of strategies for foster parent recruitment, and implementation of evidence-based practices in communities. Over 50 counties sent cross-system teams.

Additional information regarding Pennsylvania's implementation of Family First will be made available on the KeepKidsSafe website (www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov) in the next few months.

3131 Regulation Update

OCYF continues to work diligently on the creation of the 3131 regulations that will rescind and replace the current 3130 regulations, *Administration of County Children and Youth Social Service Programs*. The new regulations are scheduled to be released for public comment in the upcoming calendar year.

Tuition Waiver Program

On June 28, 2019, Governor Wolf signed House Bill 1615, known as Act 16 of 2019, thereby amending the School Code bill establishing the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program, which takes effect for the fall 2020 semester. The Fostering Education Tuition Waiver Program provides tuition and mandatory fee waivers for youth who are or were in foster care, are Pennsylvania residents and are eligible for the federal Chafee Education and Training Grant program under the Federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. Tuition waivers apply to both public (state) colleges and universities, community colleges, private post-secondary schools and other schools. Youth are eligible to receive the waivers for five years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26. In addition to the waivers, each post-secondary institution must establish a Point of Contact (POC) to assist youth with technical assistance, eligibility and other resources that may be available to them on and off campus. Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found on the PHEAA website at: <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml>.

National Youth in Transition Database

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) implementation is ongoing with the Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), Served Population (any youth receiving independent living services regardless of age) and Follow-up Population (youth surveys at age 19 and 21 depending on cohort period). As of October 1, 2019, Pennsylvania entered Cohort 4 for Baseline Surveys for all 17-year-old youth in foster care. Counties can log onto www.getnytdpa.org to enter their survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov or at 717-214-7385.

If you have any problems with password reset, or you don't remember what your username is (or have any other technical assistance questions related to NYTD), please contact the NYTD Help Desk at evalsupport@pcgus.com.

Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) Update

Governor Wolf signed Senate Bill 235, now known as Act 47, on July 2, 2019, which made several updates, including changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) as it pertains to provisional employees for limited periods. This change to the CPSL took effect December 31, 2019 stating that employers, administrators, supervisors or other persons responsible for employment decisions may not employ applicants on a provisional hire basis. Waivers of this provision will only be considered for child day care centers, group day care homes, or

family child-care homes. This portion of Act 47 making the amendment to the CPSL originated from the federal Family First Prevention Services Act. Additional information can be found on the KeepKidsSafe website (www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov).

Bulletin Updates

OCYF *Bulletin 3130-19-04 Serving Child Victims of Human Trafficking (CVHT) in Pennsylvania* was distributed on September 30, 2019. The purpose of this bulletin is to inform county and state officials; public and private children, youth and family service agencies; children's advocacy programs; community-based domestic violence programs; rape crisis centers; and stakeholders of the federal and state statutory requirements to ensure a multidimensional and interdisciplinary plan and approach to the identification, protection, and provision of comprehensive and coordinated services to child victims of human trafficking. This bulletin has a number of attachments, including the *Practice Guide to Serving CVHT in Pennsylvania*, which provides detailed information in sections on Commercial Sex Trafficking of Children, Standards of Practice for Serving CVHT, Children Who are Missing From Out-Of-Home Placement Settings, Collaboration, and Advocacy and Legal Considerations.

Child and Family Service Reviews

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was established by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau (CB) to ensure states' conformity with federal child welfare requirements, to determine what is experienced by children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services and to assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The CFSR focuses on the assessment of safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, as well as seven systemic factors. Pennsylvania conducted CFSR case reviews in 2019 and has developed a program improvement plan to address outcomes where Pennsylvania did not meet federal performance standards. Pennsylvania completed case reviews in Butler, Mercer, Centre, Lycoming, Northampton, Philadelphia and Lehigh Counties as part of the program improvement plan monitoring phase of the federal CFSR process. The findings are categorized by the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being and reported from a statewide perspective. Based on the findings from the 2019 reviews, Pennsylvania did not meet all the federally required targets for improvement; therefore, Pennsylvania will be conducting reviews in 2020. Please keep an eye out for communications related to reviewer recruitment.

Pennsylvania KinConnector Program

The Pennsylvania KinConnector program was created by Act 89 of 2018 to be a resource for grandparents and other relative or non-relative caregivers who are raising children in Pennsylvania. The KinConnector program is a telephone support line that serves as a bridge for kinship care families to help them identify multiple sources of assistance, including local, state, federal and private resources. It is staffed by compassionate and knowledgeable social service professionals, called "KinConnectors," who are dedicated to helping kinship care families thrive. For more information, contact the KinConnector support line at 1-866-KIN-2111 or visit the website (www.kinconnector.org).

Waiting Child Segments

The department's media contractor funds three waiting child segments across the state designed to find adoptive families for older youth in need of families. *Waiting Child* is aired on KDKA-TV, channel 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate; *Val's Kids* is aired on abc27 WHTM in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE-TV, channel 28, a Wilkes-Barre NBC affiliate. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for the children of PA.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on:

- KDKA's *Waiting Child*, please contact Nikita Lewis at nlewis@diakon-swan.org. The contract with KDKA began January 20 and will end June 21, 2020.
- WHTM's *Val's Kids*, please contact Alfredo Gonzales at agonzales@diakon-swan.org. Contract with WHTM begins January 6th and will end June 21, 2020.
- If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE's *A Little Love*, please contact Crissy Crawford at ccrawford@diakon-swan.org. The contract with WBRE began January 6 and will end June 21, 2020.

SWAN/IL Google Groups

There are over 700 members of the SWAN/IL ListServ through Google Groups. This is a great way to share confidential information across the network, seek colleagues' advice and announce upcoming events. Anyone wishing to join the group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency, SWAN affiliate agency or IL provider. If interested, please contact Bobbi Whary at bwhary@diakon-swan.org or 717-558-1223.

National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise

Last year, OCYF partnered with the American Public Human Services Association to use the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) for the electronic transmission of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) documents. NEICE successfully went live on November 5, 2018 and allows the Division of Operations, Interstate Compact Unit to electronically send and receive ICPC documents with participating states. NEICE streamlines and improves ICPC processes, timeliness, and approvals. OCYF is committed to ensuring children's safety in foster care, guardianship, or adoption placements. This automated transfer assists in the timely placement of children across state boundaries with near real-time communication among local child welfare caseworkers and state ICPC administrators in both sending and receiving states. Additionally, to streamline the ICPC and Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) document submission processes, the DocuShare Solution allows county children and youth agencies to submit and receive ICPC and ICAMA documents electronically with OCYF. The DocuShare Solution uses an in-box and an out-box approach for sending and receiving electronic documents. In February 2019, Pennsylvania counties began a planned twelve-month phased implementation of the DocuShare Solution process. As of December 2019, 56 county children and youth agencies have successfully transitioned to DocuShare for receiving interstate documents.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

OCYF, in partnership with Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), will be supporting events throughout the state through the Child Abuse Prevention and Education (CAPE) grant during the month of April. Additional information about events will be forthcoming as they are still in the planning phase.

Wednesday, April 1, 2020 - event pending in Pittsburgh

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 - Annual Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Awards and Child Abuse Prevention Month Ceremony at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg.

For the most up-to-date information related to Child Abuse Prevention Month, visit PSFA's website (www.pa-fsa.org) or www.facebook.com/ProtectPAKids.

Accurint

Accurint is an online search tool available to every Pennsylvania county. It can be used to assist with family finding efforts, contact information, criminal checks and identifying individuals for any type of family engagement meeting. Please be aware that only county employees may be Accurint administrators for a county's account, and only administrators and county employees can be Accurint users. If you or your staff would like training in the Accurint software, please contact Bill News, Accurint education consultant, at William.news@lexisnexisrisk.com or (215) 285-7108.

If you have any questions about Accurint, the number of Accurint users your county has, who your users are, etc., please contact W. Donald Dickinson at wildickins@pa.gov or (717) 787-2726.

Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675
717-787-3984
www.dhs.pa.gov

From the SWAN Prime Contract

Diakon-SWAN, LLC/Family Design Resources, Inc.

SWAN LSI Program Stakeholders Survey Results

During the spring of 2019, the SWAN Research and Quality Assurance team asked SWAN Legal Services Initiative (SWAN LSI) Stakeholders (county solicitors, county supervisors and administrators) to provide feedback regarding the services and impact of SWAN LSI in their counties. We are appreciative of all stakeholders who took the time to complete the survey and provide feedback that will help increase the program's effectiveness.

Some highlights of the results include:

- 94% of respondents believe that SWAN LSI is helping their county expedite permanency.
- 96% of respondents use SWAN LSI paralegals to perform diligent searches for relatives of children.
- 92% of respondents report that SWAN LSI paralegals are instrumental in the court process.
- 98% of respondents indicate that SWAN LSI paralegals promptly and properly complete legal documents and related paperwork.

Results did not identify statewide areas of deficiency, however, program managers are addressing individual county concerns to continuously improve the impact of the LSI program.

Early in 2020, SWAN LSI will conduct a statewide survey of judges and hearing officers to gather perspectives on the program's impact with the courts. The survey questions will focus on SWAN LSI involvement with the court and not on county court practices. More information about the judges/hearing officers' survey will be released prior to the launch of the survey.

Post-permanency Resource Directory Released

We have released the SWAN Post-permanency Resource Directory. This collection of resources was assembled collaboratively by SWAN technical assistance staff and affiliate agency representatives during a recent Post-permanency Unit of Service meeting.

The directory contains community resources for use by SWAN Post-permanency affiliate workers throughout the state and contains resources grouped by region in the following categories: budgeting, clothing, education, emergency, food/nutrition, housing/environment, labor/work, mental health, service systems and transportation.

We will update the directory annually, and we encourage network staff to submit verified resources for inclusion. The directory is housed in the [Post-permanency section](#) of the *SWAN Permanency Toolkit*.

Diligent Search Packet Supports Best Practice and the Law

Diligent searches are a key component of family finding, Fostering Connections, concurrent planning and building connections for all youth, regardless of placement status or goal. SWAN LSI defines a diligent search as a search conducted to locate parents, relatives or other permanency resources or connections for a child receiving services from or in the custody of a county agency.

The SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet contains guidance and forms to help the network achieve best practice with searches and comply with various state and federal mandated search efforts. This packet, updated biennially, is available in the [SWAN LSI section](#) of the *SWAN Permanency Toolkit*. We also offer trainings that detail how to conduct a diligent search and explain the legislative mandates involving search and engagement.

If you have any questions about diligent search practice, or if you would like to explore training options, please contact your SWAN LSI coordinator or SWAN regional technical assistant.

Mediator Training: Save the Date

Advoz Mediation and Restorative Practices of Lancaster will provide a three-day mediator training for Post-permanency workers tailored to working with Post-Adoption Contract Agreements on March 24-26, 2020 at the office of the SWAN prime contractor. One worker per SWAN Post-permanency affiliate may attend.

This training is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families and Diakon/FDR, the SWAN prime contractor, and there will be no fee for participants. Attendees will be responsible for providing their own overnight accommodations and meals.

Stay tuned for more details about registration. SWAN conferencing will send information via email closer to the event.

CORE Teen Training of Trainers Coming Soon

In the coming months, the prime contract will be hosting a training of trainers for the CORE (Critical On-going Resource Family Education) Teen Curriculum. This two-day workshop is intended for staff from county and affiliate agencies. Participants will learn how to facilitate the CORE Teen Curriculum with families who support older youth.

This curriculum was developed by Spaulding for Children, in partnership with the ChildTrauma Academy, Center for Adoption Support and Education, North American Council on Adoptable Children, and University of Washington as a result of a three-year Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development Initiative grant from the Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

There are three main components of this curriculum: self-assessment, classroom instruction and right-time training. These are designed to equip resource parents with skills necessary to meet the needs of youth in their home with real-life tips.

If you have any questions, please contact your SWAN regional technical assistant.

Training will be offered on the following dates. Participants are asked to attend two consecutive days.

- February 5-6, 2020 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day)
Church on the Mall, Plymouth Meeting
Office of the prime contractor, Harrisburg
Pathways Church, Beaver Falls
- March 4-5, 2020 (9 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day)
Church on the Mall, Plymouth Meeting
Office of the prime contractor, Harrisburg
John Heinz Center, Wilkes-Barre Twp.
City Magistrate Office, Butler

Highlights of SWAN LSI Impact

SWAN LSI has a presence in every county across the state. Although the tasks completed in each county may vary, all SWAN LSI staff are focused on expediting permanency for children involved in Pennsylvania’s child welfare system. Here’s a statewide look at some of the impact that the program is having so far this fiscal year (July 1 – November 30, 2019).

Number of children served with at least one LSI activity	21,266
Number of children with at least one diligent search activity	4,945
Number of children with at least one diligent search activity that resulted in location and verification of an address for at least one relative	2,601
Number of children with termination paperwork prepared by an LSI paralegal	1,417
Number of children with adoption documents prepared by an LSI paralegal	445

Pennsylvania Recognized for Efforts to Address Trauma in Children with Incarcerated Parents

The Commonwealth was recognized in a March 2019 U.S. News and World Report article for efforts to address trauma experienced by children of incarcerated parents. The article described the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections’ (PA DOC) efforts to make arts and crafts activities available for all inmates and their children to enhance visitation. According to the PA DOC website, over 80,000 Pennsylvania children have a parent incarcerated within a state facility. Many of these families are involved in multiple systems, including child welfare.

Two SWAN resources have been developed to support the network in working with incarcerated parents. The *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual* (IRM) can assist caseworkers and supervisors while case-planning with incarcerated parents and counties as they strive to engage these families. The manual includes Pennsylvania county prison policies and procedures as well as links to state and federal facilities. The manual can be accessed in the [SWAN LSI section](#) of the *SWAN Permanency Toolkit*.

In addition to the IRM, SWAN legal training specialists offer a course titled *Opening Doors: Children of Incarcerated Parents*. Every county experiences cases with incarcerated parents, which present challenges related to communication with the parent, meaningful casework, visitation, and timely permanency. *Opening Doors* clarifies legal issues related to incarcerated parents, sets the legal issues in their social work/clinical context, and explores methods for caseworkers to support improved practices. This training is updated frequently to represent changes in procedures and legal precedents.

If you have any questions about the IRM or the *Opening Doors* training, please contact your SWAN LSI coordinator or regional technical assistant.

To read the full U.S. News and World Report article:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-03-12/pennsylvania-works-to-improve-outcomes-for-children-of-incarcerated-parents>

To read a related press release:

https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/corrections_details.aspx?newsid=389

Governor Wolf Proclaims November Adoption Awareness Month

Governor Wolf’s November 2019 Adoption Awareness Month proclamation encouraged “citizens across the commonwealth to recognize the importance of adoption and make every effort to ensure that all children in Pennsylvania have a safe, loving place to call home.”

The Governor celebrated the 2,578 children who were adopted in 2018 and honored the adoptive parents who answer the call to share a loving home. Governor Wolf recognized that, despite successes, there is still much permanency work to be done in Pennsylvania.

The network responded in earnest to this call to action by hosting 40 adoption-related events throughout November. These included National Adoption Day celebrations, matching events and adoption awareness events. The hard work and dedication of those involved with these events cannot be underestimated or applauded enough!

You may read Governor Wolf’s proclamation here: <https://diakon-swan.org/swan/documents/item/430/>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2020 Spring Quarterly Meetings

Scranton — March 25, 2020

Clarion — April 1, 2020

Monroeville — April 2, 2020

Philadelphia — April 15, 2020

Lansdale — April 16, 2020

Harrisburg — April 21, 2020

2020 SWAN/IL Summer Statewide Meeting

June 16-17

28th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

June 17-19

Kalahari Resorts and Conventions
250 Kalahari Drive
Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania 18349

www.diakon-swan.org/swan/events/upcoming/



www.adoptpakids.org

SWAN Prime Contract

P.O. Box 4560
471 JPL Wick Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111-0560
Ph: 717-236-8490 | Fax: 717-236-8510
www.diakon-swan.org

**From the PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)
Independent Living Project
University of Pittsburgh**

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Waivers

Fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Test are available for students currently in high school who cannot afford to pay the test fees. Please be sure to indicate on the SAT Waiver Request Form which test your youth wishes to take. If a youth already graduated or did not graduate, but received their GED, the College Board will not accept the fee waiver. There are also a limited number of college application fee waivers. Eligible students can receive a total of four SAT fee waivers during their academic career – two for the SAT Reasoning Test and two for the SAT Subject Tests. Fee waivers for the SAT Reasoning Test are available for juniors and seniors only. Fee waivers for the SAT Subject Test are available for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors; students who are not yet in ninth grade may not use the subject test fee waivers. A fee waiver can cover as many as three subject tests on one test day.

If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Frank Revesz at frevesz@pitt.edu. To learn more about SAT test-day requirements and general SAT questions, please visit: <http://www.sat.org/test-day>.

IL Site Visits/Technical Assistance

The 2019-2020 IL Program site visits are underway across the state. The CWRC practice improvement specialist assigned to your county will be making contact to set up the site visit. The goal of these visits is to strengthen services and outcomes for older youth and to continue to build strong collaborative partnerships with providers and technical assistance staff.

IL Networking Sessions

IL networking sessions are offered in all regions of the state to support both new and seasoned IL staff in working with older youth. The meetings are driven by staff learning needs and include opportunities to share information, bring in relevant presenters and brainstorm with other staff about how to address issues you are experiencing or in which you may need additional support. If you are interested in connecting with your regional IL networking group, please contact Meghan O'Hare at meo43@pitt.edu.

Save the Dates

Please save the date for these upcoming IL events:

- 2020 YAB Leadership Summit will be held at the Child Welfare Resource Center on June 25-26
- 2020 Older Youth Retreat will be held at the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown Campus on August 10 – 14.

You can find more information about these events on the YAB website (<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/>).

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

717-795-9048

www.payab.pitt.edu

Statewide Youth Advisory Board Projects

In 2018/2019, the YAB focused on creating the Youth Introductory Questionnaire, as well as a resource parent brochure. The Youth Introductory Questionnaire is an online resource that provides a platform for youth to introduce themselves to potential resource families in their own words. It also provides an avenue for youth to begin a dialogue with resource families about some of the challenges they face as they transition to adulthood and ways in which the resource family can support them in that transition.

In addition to the Youth Introductory Questionnaire, the YAB developed a resource parent brochure outlining tips for supporting older youth in transition. The goal is for the brochure to be incorporated into existing training for resource parents. The brochure is an excellent resource for agency offices, training events, and any other environments in which resource parents are found. Both products are located on the YAB website (<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/default.htm>).

Know Your Rights Revisions

The YAB is currently partnering with the Juvenile Law Center to revise the *Know Your Rights* curriculum. The goal is to digitize the training and ensure it is youth friendly. Once the curriculum is revised, CWRC will share that information with its listservs.

IL Trainings (available on-line and in-person)

CWRC recently revised the IL training series. Modules one and two, *Purpose and Policy* and *Adolescent Issues: Risk and Resiliency*, are now available online through the CWRC E-Learn site (www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/ELEARN.htm). The third module, *Engaging Older Youth*, is an in-person training involving application of theories learned in modules one and two through simulation-based training. If you have questions regarding how to register for these trainings, please contact Rachael Ickes at cwtpreg@pitt.edu.