

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Important Notice About Medicaid and SNAP Benefits

In July 2025, Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, also known as HR1, that will change programs run by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). President Trump signed that bill into law. The law makes changes to [Medicaid \(Medical Assistance\)](#) and the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#). Changes to Medicaid will begin in fall 2026. At this time, there have been no changes to Medicaid. DHS will keep Medicaid recipients updated about their benefits and what they need to do to maintain their Medicaid coverage. Please note that benefits will not change without advance notice from DHS.

DHS is launching [Human Services Helpers](#), a Substack that will cover updates on DHS programs, news from the agency, and how organizations and partners can help their communities. Specifically, as DHS implements changes required by the federal government under HR1, [Human Services Helpers](#) will share resources and tips to help Pennsylvanians affected by these changes understand what is happening and what they must do to keep their benefits.

Recently published guidance from DHS:

- November 18, 2025, Medical Assistance Bulletin 35-25-01, [School-Based ACCESS Program Provider Handbook](#)
- November 20, 2025, Medical Assistance Bulletin 09-25-43, [Targeted Case Management Services for Eligible Juveniles Enrolled in Medical Assistance Prior to Release from a Carceral Setting](#)
- December 2, 2025, Medical Assistance Bulletin 99-25-08, [Immunization Coverage Update](#)

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), in partnership with OCYF, has planned several activities and events during April, Child Abuse

Prevention Month. Additional activities and information about Child Abuse Prevention Month can be found at pafsa.org.

Throughout April: Blue Ribbon Campaign

The symbol for child abuse prevention is the blue ribbon. Wearing a blue ribbon (or blue clothing) is a visual way for individuals to demonstrate they are taking a stand against child abuse and encouraging others to do the same.

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

- Wear blue in support of "Turn Pennsylvania Blue," as blue is the national symbolic color of child abuse prevention.
- 9:00 am - Flag planting from Front Street to the Capitol steps in Harrisburg.
- 10:30 am - Annual PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Awards & Child Abuse Prevention Month Ceremony at the Capitol building Rotunda in Harrisburg.

National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month. This year's theme, "Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities," recognizes the important role that people from all parts of child welfare play in supporting children, youth and families and highlights the need to create a child welfare system that authentically engages and supports young people who are preparing to leave foster care. OCYF will be issuing \$65,000 in mini-grants to agencies and coalitions across the state to support recruitment and/or awareness events during the month of May. Mini-grant information will be released early March.

Citizen Review Panel

The Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in Pennsylvania have successfully completed the recruitment of new members for the Northwest, North Central, and Southeast Panels. These panels play a vital role in addressing both local and statewide concerns, offering valuable recommendations to improve child welfare services.

The CRPs welcomed their new members, following a brief orientation in November and began work on

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the 2025 CRP Annual Report. This report will include recommendations to OCYF on ways to strengthen Pennsylvania's child welfare system. Once received, OCYF will begin to respond to these recommendations after thoughtful consideration.

OCYF Trauma Team

The OCYF Trauma Team is proud to announce the release of the *Developing Trauma Sensitivity for Child Welfare Professionals* training. This training explores what it means to be trauma-sensitive and is the second module in a series designed to support Pennsylvania's Child Welfare organizations in becoming Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered. The OCYF Trauma Team extends thanks to their partners at the CWRC for their ongoing collaboration in this important work.

Additionally, the CWRC has announced the release of the *Trauma-Informed Supervision in Casework Practice in Pennsylvania* course. This 6-hour in-person, Team-Based Learning™ module provides opportunities for skill growth and application, including developing plans and tools for immediate application by supervisors. It is about reexamining how and why supervisors do what they do, how they model trauma-informed behaviors, and how they can positively impact supervisees' well-being and that of children, families, and themselves by applying the principles of trauma-informed care.

This training is one of many trauma-informed courses available through the CWRC as part of the OCYF Trauma Team's broader efforts. To access the full list of trauma-informed trainings, please visit the E-learn site at e-learn.pitt.edu under the Well-being section.

As the OCYF Trauma team continues to expand trauma-informed courses through the CWRC, the team remains committed to education and to advancing trauma-informed care within the system. The trauma-informed courses available through the CWRC remain free of charge to all OCYF licensed providers.

Educational Stability

Title I Educational Stability Provisions Two-Part Training Series:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) continue to collaborate to promote educational stability and success for students in foster care. A recent [Dear Colleague letter](#) announced updates to [federal non-regulatory guidance](#) and training opportunities. A sincere thank you to all who attended the "Title I Educational Stability Provisions: Ensuring Educational Stability and Success for Students in Foster Care" two-part webinar series that focused on educational stability

and support for students in foster care.

PA School Code Update: Update to the Procedure When a Child is Truant:

The Pennsylvania School Code, [§ 1333](#), has been updated by [Act 47 of 2025](#) to include new provisions regarding the procedure for when a child is truant. The update includes new language requiring that LEAs:

- (2.1) shall include notice to the person in parental relation that a child who is habitually truant may not transfer, during the school year, to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child;
- (2.2) shall include resources available to assist the child and the person in parental relation with returning the child to compliant compulsory school attendance and opportunities for further academic recovery in response to the truant behavior.

Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) new Data Point:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) have issued [guidance](#) on the new "Foster Student" data point within the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

Final Rule, Separate Licensing Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes

On September 28, 2023, the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued a final rule amending regulations to allow Title IV-E agencies to claim Title IV-E federal financial participation for the cost of foster care maintenance payments on behalf of an otherwise eligible child who is placed in a relative or kinship licensed or approved foster family home when the agency uses different licensing standards for relative or kinship foster family homes and non-relative/non-kinship foster family homes. Prior to the publication of this new rule, federal regulations required Title IV-E agencies to use the same licensing standards for both kin and non-kin caregivers, disregarding the unique needs of kinship homes.

This new rule encourages Title IV-E agencies to develop separate kinship-specific licensing standards that place as few burdens on relative and kinship families as possible, limited to federal requirements only, such as the safety requirements in sections 471(a)(10)(A) and (a)(20) of the Social Security Act. In addition, the new rule requires Title IV-E agencies to provide all licensed or approved relative or kinship foster family homes with the same amount of Foster Care Maintenance Payments that would have been

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made if the child were placed in a licensed or approved unrelated foster family home.

According to the federal rule, states may elect to establish separate kinship-specific licensing standards that are in accord with recommended standards of national organizations for foster family homes related to:

- Admission policies, safety, sanitation, and protection of civil rights,
- Use of the reasonable and prudent parenting standard; and,
- Procedures for criminal records checks, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases.

OCYF consulted with DHS Executive Offices, including the Office of General Counsel, Office of Legislative Affairs, and the DHS Executive Policy Office on the process to implement separate kinship-specific licensing standards. Upon consultation, it was determined that a legislative amendment would be required to allow for implementation of separate kinship-specific licensing standards.

OCYF continues to work closely with these offices on the process to introduce a legislative amendment. OCYF intends to share the proposed standards for comment and feedback from community partners. More information will be forthcoming in the next several months.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

NYTD collects information in the following areas: Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), Served Population (any youth or young adult receiving independent living services regardless of age) and Follow-up Population (youth surveys at age 19 and 21, depending on Cohort period). October 1, 2025, marked the beginning of Cohort 6 for the Baseline Population. All youth who reach age 17 while in care **must** be registered and provided with an opportunity to complete a survey within the required 45-day window of their 17th birthday. The 2026A reporting period will run through March 31, 2026, with the 2026B period beginning on April 1, 2026.

OCYF encourages youth to receive an incentive in the form of a gift card or stipend for completing their baseline survey. This demonstrates the value of their voice and time to youth. This is an approved expense under the IL Grant.

All 2026A period survey and served data is due by April 15, 2026. Counties can log onto getnytdpa.org to enter their served and survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or 717-787-7056.

If you have new staff, need assistance with

resetting your password, forgot your username, or have other technical assistance questions related to NYTD, please contact the NYTD Help Desk at 800-436-4105 or getnytd@pcgus.com.

Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2025–2026 academic year is still available on PHEAA's website at Chafee Education and Training Grant Program (pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program). The deadline to apply is March 31, 2026.

As a reminder, current ETG award recipients will automatically be enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete another ETG application. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

Questions regarding the ETG program can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056. Youth who have questions related to the status of their ETG application can contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.

Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterEd, requires Pennsylvania post-secondary institutions to award a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for Pennsylvania resident youth who meet Chafee ETG eligibility requirements and have applied for all available federal and state grants. Tuition and mandatory fee waivers apply to both public (state) colleges and universities, community colleges, private post-secondary institutions, and other eligible schools. Youth are eligible to receive waivers for five years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26. All youth who apply for Chafee ETG are automatically evaluated for FosterEd.

In addition to the waivers, each post-secondary institution must appoint a Point of Contact (POC) to assist youth with eligibility, technical assistance, and other resources that may be available to them on and off campus. County and private provider IL Caseworkers/Coordinators may be contacted by the POC to verify a youth's eligibility. This is a critical step in assisting youth with verifying their eligibility when entering post-secondary education and financial aid packages are being awarded.

Each post-secondary education institution is required to have their identified POC listed on their website. A list of POCs can be found on the Center for Schools and Communities website at Foster Care Contact Directory (center-school.org).

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Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program ([PHEAA/FosterEd.org](https://pheaa.org/FosterEd.org)). Questions regarding FosterEd can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at lglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

Credit Reports

The [Social Security Act §475](#) requires that CCYAs perform credit checks for all youth in foster care at age 14 and older by **all three** credit bureaus on a **yearly** basis. Each Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and a process to ensure foster care youths' credit history checks are completed appropriately. If you have questions regarding credit report requirements or need assistance obtaining a credit history from one of the Credit Bureaus, please contact Lindsey Glezen at lglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

New Student Loan Repayment Loan Options

The US Department of Education announced the reopening of two student loan repayment plans to give borrowers more options to keep their payments affordable. Please share with anyone who might benefit from having this information.

The Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) repayment plans offer income-driven repayment (IDR) and credit for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) to eligible borrowers enrolled in the currently enjoined Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan (ed.gov/higher-education/manage-your-loans/save-plan), as well as other terms that borrowers may wish to consider.

- As income-driven repayment plans, Income-Contingent Repayment and Pay as You Earn set monthly payments based on borrowers' earnings and family size and have allowed borrowers to earn loan forgiveness after 20 to 25 years. And many public servants use them to keep their payments low as they work to earn Public Service Loan Forgiveness after just 10 years.
- The Income-Contingent Repayment and Pay as You Earn applications are available at StudentAid.gov/idr.
- To apply, borrowers need to log-in to their studentaid.gov account and upload income information.
- The US Department of Education authorized new enrollments in the plans through regulatory changes.
- The Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) and Pay as You Earn plans will remain available to new enrollments until July 1, 2027.

Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Project and Education Barriers to Permanency Project– American Bar Association (ABA)

The ABA Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Project and Education Barriers to Permanency Project are actively seeking new projects or technical assistance counties.

These projects work collaboratively with key county stakeholders from the child welfare agency, court, education system, private providers, and community by providing intensive on sight assistance to counties for two to three years, depending on needs.

Technical assistance can range from one training to a few months of engagement. Please reach out if you would like to discuss the ways in which we may be of assistance.

Areas in which the ABA is available to help include:

- Improving collaboration and communication between CYS, court, attorneys, and local providers
- Integrating a kin-first culture
- Providing hands-on court skills and testifying training for case workers
- Incorporating a race equity lens in child welfare
- Implementing trauma Informed court practices
- Meeting the educational needs of youth in foster care
- Improving school stability and education decision making
- Special education advocacy
- Engaging parents in educational advocacy

For more information on Permanency Barriers technical assistance please see: PA Permanency Project (americanbar.org) or contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at heidi.epstein@americanbar.org.

For more information on the Education Barriers to Permanency Project please see: Education Barriers to Permanency Project (americanbar.org) or contact Kathleen McNaught at kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org.

Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)

Families Helping Families for 50 Years

The Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA) is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Pennsylvania's foster, adoptive, and kinship families. For five decades, PSRFA has worked to strengthen families, elevate their voices, and ensure they never feel alone on their journey.

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Who We Are

PSRFA serves as a bridge between resource families, agencies, and state-level partners. We listen, advocate, and help families find the right support when they're facing challenges, celebrating successes, or navigating the complexities of the child welfare system.

What We Do

- Advocacy and Guidance:
When families have questions or concerns, we connect them to the right supports, such as the LSI Warmline (legal guidance), the Helpline (post-permanency), and local and regional offices that can help point them in the right direction when unexpected challenges arise.
- Training and Education:
PSRFA provides training opportunities and helps resource families meet annual training requirements. PSRFA's eight regions help identify local needs in order to bring meaningful, relevant training topics to families across Pennsylvania.
- Support, Encouragement and Recognition:
Being a resource parent is an incredibly meaningful role and a difficult one. PSRFA is committed to uplifting, celebrating, and honoring foster, adoptive, and kinship families throughout the year. Each May, during National Foster Care Month, PSRFA hosts Resource Family Appreciation Days, offering membership families a free, fun activity as a heartfelt thank you for all they do. This coming May, PSRFA is excited to celebrate with a special outing on May 16th at the Pittsburgh Pirates Stadium, where the Pirates will face the Philadelphia Phillies. Tickets, food, and drinks are included for resource families. Additional details will be released soon.
- Connection and Community:
We bring families, agencies, and statewide partners together to build a supportive network rooted in compassion, shared experience, and meaningful collaboration.

PSRFA Membership

Family Membership: \$25 per year

Agency Membership: \$60 per year

Membership provides direct access to statewide support, resources, communication, and networking. It also strengthens the collective voice of Pennsylvania's resource families, helping us advocate more effectively at the state level.

Why Become a PSRFA Member?

For Families

- Access to guidance when you're not sure where to turn
- Training opportunities to support your growth and meet requirements
- Updates on statewide resources, policy changes, and family supports
- A community that encourages, uplifts, and walks with you
- Eligibility for PSRFA's scholarship opportunities

For Agencies

- A trusted partner supporting your resource families
- Stronger communication and collaboration with PSRFA
- Training coordination and referrals
- Increased family retention through added support and recognition
- Participation in a statewide network dedicated to improving outcomes for children

Newsletter and Regional Representation Updates

PSRFA's Quarterly Newsletter is back!

If you know a resource family who has done something amazing and deserves to be spotlighted, or if you'd like to contribute an article, PSRFA would love to hear from you. PSRFA's newsletter highlights the heart, dedication, and resilience of Pennsylvania's foster, adoptive, and kinship families.

PSRFA is seeking volunteer Board Members to represent the following regions:

- Region 4: Lycoming, Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Berks, and Lehigh Counties
- Region 7: Erie, Crawford, Warren, McKean, Cameron, Elk, Jefferson, Clarion, Forest, and Mercer Counties

If you are a resource parent or know someone who may be interested in becoming a volunteer Board Member, please contact Melissa Geesaman at mgeesaman@psrfa.org, or you can call the toll-free number at 1-800-951-5151.

CWEB and CWEL Programs

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) The CWEB program is now present in 22 schools across the state, which provides ample opportunity for senior social work majors to prepare for public child welfare employment. CWEB students complete child welfare coursework, enroll in Foundations training and engage in a child welfare

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practicum in one of the 67 county child welfare agencies. They are ready to join the workforce immediately following graduation. Students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate for their senior year, fellowship payments during their internship, a bonus upon graduation, and more. Upon graduation, a one-year work commitment in a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency is required. Through the spring term of 2024-2025, 36 students completed their studies and began agency employment. For more information, visit Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates at Home | School of Social Work. Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) The CWEL Program strengthens Pennsylvania public child welfare services by providing graduate-level educational opportunities for current public child welfare professionals at 13 partner graduate schools. Seven programs offer a fully online course of study. Counties and OCYF approve students for either full-time or part-time participation; all students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate, reimbursement for books, and other benefits. Full-time students are also granted educational leave from their jobs, and their county employers receive reimbursement for the student's salary and benefits. Upon graduation, a work commitment at their county agency is required. Through the summer term of 2024-2025, 52 students completed studies and resumed agency employment. Additional information is available at: socialwork.pitt.edu.

Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) The CWEL and CWEL Teams are available to provide presentations to county commissioners, advisory boards, agency leadership teams, agency staff members and independent living programs. For more information and to schedule a presentation, please contact Laura Borish, CWEL/CWEL Agency Coordinator at lb14@pitt.edu or 412-334-9122.

Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program, KinConnector

The PA KinConnector Program offers kinship caregivers and professionals who work with kinship caregivers support, guidance, training and resources. Please provide kinship caregivers with information about PA KinConnector. The PA KinConnector helpline can be reached at 866-546-2111. The website is kinconnector.org, and includes a comprehensive, guided search feature of resources in the following topic areas: childcare, clothing, financial assistance, food, legal, medical, school, and support groups. Also available on the website are training opportunities for both professionals and kinship caregivers, printable resources, a podcast series called "Kindred Voices," and a virtual Support Group called "Kindred Spirits." You can also view highlighted

stories of kinship families [here](#).

OCYF encourages all county and provider agencies to connect to PA KinConnector and learn more about the services offered, provide new community resource information for website inclusion and to establish partnerships for program growth across the state. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Diane Michel at dmichel@pa.gov or 717-705-2911.

Accurint

Accurint is an online search tool available to every county throughout the state. It is able to assist with family finding efforts, contact information, criminal checks and identifying individuals for any type of family engagement meeting. Each county must have a county employee who is designated as their Accurint administrator. Administrators can be Accurint users or non-users. Non-user administrators do not count toward the county's allotment of users. Counties may have more than one Accurint administrator. If you or your staff would like training on the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Jessica Kraft at Jessica.Kraft@lexisnexisrisk.com or 937-286-7660. Additionally, you can look up trainings on the National Training Calendar (learn.lexisnexisrisk.com/learn). If you have any questions about Accurint or to set up a non-user administrator account, please contact Jessica Andrews-Slagel at jandrewssl@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) offers virtual and in-person, three-hour Mandated Reporter Trainings (MRT) at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania. PFSA also offers trainings with Spanish translators, American Sign Language and Certified Deaf Interpreter translations. PFSA also offers MRT for Amish Foster Parents and Amish Mandated Reporters conducted by an Amish instructor.

Trainings include "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse," which meets all the requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse, as well as "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" and "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" for mandated reporters who have taken Mandated Reporter Training before and need to take it again. The "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" training is designed to help participants respond to disclosures of child abuse in a way that is sensitive and supportive to the child, but without tainting the child's memory. The "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" training helps participants recognize the signs of neglect, determine when and how to

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make a referral, and increase understanding of General Protective Services and agency procedures.

All trainings utilize a child abuse recognition and reporting training curriculum approved by DHS in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), as well as approved by the Department of State (DOS) for persons requiring continuing education credit toward licensure or certification.

PFSA also offers a specialized Residential Care Facility Training (RCFT) for individuals who are employed by organizations and agencies licensed under Title 55, Chapter 3800, Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities. The RCFT Program provides information to appropriately identify recordable, reportable, and suspected child abuse incidents, as well as information about documentation, minimal facts interviewing and development and implementation of plans of supervision for staff who are under investigation of suspected child abuse. Additional information and training dates can be found on the PSFA website (pafsa.org). For questions or to schedule a specific session for your organization, please email PFSA at training@pa-fsa.org.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (PA-AAP) offers Mandated Reporter Trainings, specifically for Primary Care Physicians (and their staff), Hospitals, Emergency Medical Services and School Nurses, through their Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program. To schedule in-person or virtual training for medical professionals, contact PA-AAP at scan@paaap.org or call 866-823-7226.

The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) continues to offer free virtual Mandated Reporter Training. It can be taken by visiting reportabusepa.pitt.edu.

Media Campaign

The #MeetTheKids media campaign is designed to support recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive families across Pennsylvania. OCYF is currently working on a plan to continue the previous campaign to begin airing mid to late January on network and cable television in all six media markets in Pennsylvania. This will also include radio and online advertisements.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families.

Waiting Child Segments

The Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families funds five waiting child segments across the state designed to find

adoptive families for children and youth in need of families. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for children and youth in foster care and providing the opportunity to enhance child-specific recruitment efforts across the Commonwealth.

If you'd like to feature a waiting child, please reach out to the representative listed below.

- *Waiting Child*, KDKA-TV, Channel 2, CBS, Pittsburgh
Nikita Lewis at nlewis@diakon-swan.org
- *Val's Kids*, ABC27 WHTM, Harrisburg
Alfredo Gonzalez at algonzalez@diakon-swan.org
- *A Little Love*, WBRE-TV, channel 28, NBC, Wilkes-Barre
Sarah Reiss at sreiss@diakon-swan.org
- *Finding Forever*, WJAC, channel 6, Johnstown
Katie Juliana at kjuliana@diakon-swan.org
- *A Family for Life*, WSEE, channel 35, CBS and WICU, channel 12, NBC, Erie
Nic Landon at nlandon@diakon-swan.org

SWAN/IL Google Groups

The SWAN/IL Listserv, hosted through Google Groups, serves as an excellent platform for network members to share confidential information, waiting families, waiting children, matching events, and post-permanency resources. It also provides opportunities to seek advice from colleagues and announce upcoming events. Membership is limited to employees of county children and youth agencies, SWAN affiliate agencies, or IL providers. If interested, please contact Isabel Madrigal at imadrigal@diakon-swan.org or 717-558-1223.

Interstate Compact Unit

The PA Interstate Unit does not have the ability to process USPS, FedEx, or UPS "paper mail". When providing any case documents to the Interstate Unit, please use the unit's Resource Accounts, fax, or the Interstate/County DocuShare collection. Case documents include request packets, completed Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) home studies, 100Bs, supervisory reports, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) documents, etc.

Resource Accounts:

RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov for ICPC cases

RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov for ICAMA cases

Interstate Unit Fax Number:

717-425-5562

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In a runaway situation, email Amanda Behe at abehe@pa.gov or Natalie (Primak) Mwaniki at nmwaniki@pa.gov.

Clearance Verification Unit

Childline's Clearance Verification Unit (CVU) provides eligible individuals with the following three clearances: Child Abuse History Clearance, FBI Fingerprint Clearance and National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). The Pennsylvania (PA) Child Abuse History clearance can be submitted and paid for online through the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) self-service portal (compass.state.pa.us/cwis). Applicants can view and print their results online.

CVU will also accept PA Child Abuse History Clearance applications in paper format for anyone who may not have access to the internet. Results for paper applications are mailed to the appropriate address noted on the form and within 14 days from the date that application is received in CVU.

The Commonwealth's vendor for digital fingerprinting is IDEMIA (also referred to as IdentoGo or MorphoTrust). The fingerprint-based background check is a multi-step process. For general questions about FBI clearances, please contact the FBI Background Check Unit at 1-877-371-5422. For IDEMIA registration, processing, or billing questions, please contact IDEMIA/IdentoGo at 1-844-321-2101. To register online go to [Identogo.com](https://identogo.com) or call 1-844-321-2101 and listen to the options menu.

CVU is responsible for processing out-of-state clearances for resource parents, including adoptive and foster parents, when a resource parent has resided outside of Pennsylvania within the past five years. Prospective foster and adoptive parents required to obtain an Out-of-State Child Abuse clearance are **no longer required** to submit the clearance to ChildLine for interpretation **IF** the clearance shows *no result (or no record)*. Out-of-State Child Abuse clearances with **ANY** result or record, **are required** to be submitted to ChildLine for interpretation.

Visit Keep Kids Safe (keepkidssafe.pa.gov) for additional information regarding the clearance or call us at 877-371-5422.

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/Voce

Updates to Post-permanency Resources

Respite Guidelines

Updated Respite Guidelines have been uploaded to [the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](https://swantoolkit.org) (swantoolkit.org) and are effective as of December 11, 2025. Changes include the respite definition as defined in the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 629a(a)(1)(D)).

Changes to allowable activities include:

- Clarifies "Day Camps;"
- Defines "Drop-in-centers;" and
- Child/Youth Mentoring Programs.

Changes to non-allowable activities include parent-only coaching or mentoring programs.

Respite Plan

The Respite Plan was revised in May 2025 and is available in [the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](https://swantoolkit.org).

Revisions include a purchased service designation in the provider summary, as well as a preparation summary in the provider information. Additionally, the final respite summary now includes a summary of services provided, respite resources and a respite continuity plan.

Reauthorization of Families Protocol

The Reauthorization of Families Protocol was revised in May 2025 and is available in [the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](https://swantoolkit.org). New criteria include:

- Change in family structure or dynamic unrelated to household composition or geographic location;
- Change in the presentation of previously identified behavior; and
- New eligible child identified as a service focus.

Additionally, "removal of a foster/kinship child previously moving toward permanency with the family" was added to the definition of "change in family household composition."

All documents are located in the SWAN Permanency Toolkit, Section 8: Benchmarks & Templates. Questions regarding these updates/revisions can be directed to your SWAN Post-permanency technical assistant.

Automated Cost-Time and Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet

SWAN released the updated Automated Cost-Time and Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet, which combines

the quarterly Cost-Time report with the Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet into a single utility. This integrated report connects agencies' actual time spent completing SWAN Units of Service with caseload and workload planning, supporting worker and supervisor time management, budgeting projections, and staffing capacity assessment.

Recently, we completed a statistical analysis of practice time and developed a new method to identify services with unusually long or short practice times. The analysis used historical practice time data by unit of service type to establish realistic minimum and maximum timeframes. Previously, all service types used a default range of 10 to 100. The results of this analysis are shown below. Beginning with the FY 25–26 Q2 Automated Cost-Time Report, services that fall below or exceed these thresholds will be highlighted as outliers.

Service Type	Maximum	Minimum
Adoption Finalization	56	11
Adoption Finalization Extension	38	3
Child Placement	107	0
Child Preparation	57	15
Child Profile	53	14
Child Profile Addendum	45	10
Child Specific Recruitment	70	10
Family Matching	100	0
Family Matching Extension	49	7
Family Profile	71	19
Family Profile Addendum	49	10

For detailed instructions on how to use the revised utility, visit the SWAN Portal, open the Support Documents page, select Training Resources, and download the file, "Supervisor Manual – SWAN Benchmark Cost and Time – Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet."

In-depth training was offered in Fall 2025, and one additional Post-permanency session will be scheduled, focusing on the practice impact of the utility. More details about the post-permanency session will be shared soon.

SWAN LSI Paralegals Lay the Foundation for Adoption Finalization

In November, National Adoption Month events and locally organized Adoption Day events raised awareness of the more than 300,000 children currently in foster care across the United States (according to the *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System*). These events also provided an opportunity to celebrate permanency achieved for Pennsylvania children and their new families, and SWAN LSI paralegals (LSIPs) continue to expertly perform the work that lays the foundation for these celebrations.

In state FY 2024-2025, LSIPs completed 1,624 adoption-related activities (up from 1,558 in SFY 2023-2024). This increase in output, despite the trending reduction of children in care overall, indicates a growing depth to LSI work, specifically towards adoption finalization. Our most recent internal tracking indicates that 43 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties currently use LSIPs to support the preparation of documents for adoption finalization.

Before work can be done to complete this process, a child must be free for adoption. When necessary and appropriate, LSIPs play a critical role in Orphans Court procedures and in facilitating the termination of parental rights (TPR) process. In state FY 2024-2025, LSIPs drafted 3,176 petitions for TPR and completed 16,866 Orphans Court activities. During the same period, LSI paralegals performed Orphans Court-related duties for 3,550 unique children. Internal data tracking indicates that 59 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties currently deploy LSI paralegals in the preparation of documents related to TPR.

As we enter 2026, SWAN LSI remains dedicated to overcoming legal barriers to permanency and supporting adoption efforts across Pennsylvania. In ongoing partnership and collaboration with CCYAs, we aim to achieve positive permanency outcomes for all Pennsylvania children in out-of-home care.

If CCYAs have questions about how LSIPs can support adoption finalization efforts, please contact your assigned LSI coordinator. (diakon-swan.org/swan/network-map)

Working With Incarcerated Parents to Impact Permanency and Improve Outcomes for All

The Pennsylvania State Roundtable's Dependent Children of Incarcerated Parents Workgroup reminds us in their mission statement that, under the law, "incarcerated parents have the same rights, as parents who are not incarcerated, to fully participate in the court process, to fully participate in case planning, to require the agency to make reasonable efforts towards reunification, and to have visitation and contact with their

children." Additionally, research finds that "maintaining parent-child contact is critical for decreasing negative outcomes for both incarcerated parents and their children." (unlv.edu/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-12/JordanDonohue-Parental-SS.pdf.)

In the past year alone, the Superior Court vacated termination orders on two cases, finding that the agencies involved failed to meet their burdens under 2511(a). In both cases, the record displayed that agencies made minimal efforts towards reunification with parents who were incarcerated.

SWAN LSI recognizes the value of working with incarcerated parents throughout the life of a child welfare case and how engagement with incarcerated parents can impact permanency for children in care.

The *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual* (IRM) remains a valuable, comprehensive tool for child welfare professionals to use for case planning with incarcerated parents and as a resource to support the county agencies' efforts to engage with these parties. The manual provides protocols for each county correctional facility in Pennsylvania, including:

- Guidance on written and telephone communication to support contact between the incarcerated parents and children;
- Visitation schedules or video visitation to support parent-child visitation; and
- Services available to the incarcerated parent to support reunification and permanency efforts.

While the IRM is focused on sharing information specific to Pennsylvania's county prison facilities, we recognize that there are dependent children who may have a parent confined to a state or federal prison facility. There are many resources available to assist in case planning for parents incarcerated in these facilities, which are linked in the IRM. If you have any questions about this resource or have updates about a facility's protocols, contact lsiirmupdates@diakonswan.org.

SWAN LSI Diligent Search Training Coming Soon

SWAN LSI will be rolling out the SWAN Diligent Search Training in the coming months. In this training, participants will be guided through the comprehensive search packet, which outlines the search process and ensures compliance with laws and regulations governing search and family-finding practices. Participants will be able to define a diligent search, gain an understanding of the history of Diligent Search, and understand the purpose and types of searches required. Additionally, they will gain resources and information to streamline their individual agency

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search process. Stay tuned for this exciting training coming your way soon!

SWAN LSI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The SWAN LSI MOU (agreement to implement the SWAN LSI program in the new prime contract) was deployed to county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) in November 2025. The process was again streamlined for many counties by using DocuSign technology. The agreement covers the five-year contract (FY 2025-26 through FY 2029-30). We appreciate the CCYAs that have already reviewed and signed off on the current MOU. SWAN LSI coordinators and division managers are available to support counties who have not yet completed the MOU process. CCYAs can contact their assigned SWAN LSI coordinator with questions about the MOU process or other LSI-related matters.

Linking and Merging Family Records in the SWAN Portal

In the SWAN Portal, “merging” family records means to combine two or more family records into one family record with one active SWAN ID and PAE number. Only one record should then show on a family search. Records must be for the same family applicants. If you notice duplicate family records with identical parent information, please ask your SWAN regional technical assistant (RTA) to merge them.

Linking family records means that two or more family records will remain separate and distinct in the portal but be linked. They will each retain their own SWAN ID, PAE number, and family record page. Family demographics may differ between linked records.

In SWAN Portal 2.0, it was common to add a second partner to the family record for a single parent. In portal 3.0, we would like affiliates to follow a different process. Instead, users should close out the single-parent family record and open a new family record as a two-parent family via a CY131. Once completed, ask your SWAN RTA to link the two separate family records.

Similarly, if you have a two-parent family going to a one-parent family, you must close the two-parent family record and open a new family record as a single parent via CY131 submissions. Once completed, ask your SWAN RTA to link these as well.

If you have any questions about these processes, contact your SWAN RTA or PAE Family coordinator Alexandra Newcomer (anewcomer@diakon-swan.org).

Processing CY131 Forms

CY131s are not processed automatically. A PAE data analyst reviews each one and processes it manually. Until the status changes from “Submitted” to “Approved” or “Rejected,” the CY131 has not yet been processed.

In SWAN Portal 3.0, affiliates can now see a grayed-out box for the “Narrative” in which they cannot enter or change information. Family narratives follow a strict format and structure, and they are limited by space. They are primarily used in electronic matches for children who are PAE Active. (The family narrative does not need to match the content on a family’s flyer.) Therefore, PAE data analysts write the narrative when they process the CY131 and only if a family is being made active for matching. PAE data analysts are also responsible for updating that narrative if any information entered in CY131 changes.

In portal 3.0, affiliates can also see a family’s “PAE Status” in the “Statuses” section. This will appear in a grayed-out box that the affiliate cannot change. Affiliates cannot directly make a family “PAE Active,” “Hold,” or “Closed.” Instead, submitting a CY131 requests that the PAE data analyst review the foster care, kinship and adoption dispositions, as well as the answer to “Matching Required” in the “Statuses” section. The PAE data analyst will then set the family’s PAE status to the appropriate category.

Since CY131s are processed manually, note that there may be a short window between CY131 submission and the PAE status change taking effect. If you have any questions about this process, contact your SWAN RTA or PAE Family Coordinator Alexandra Newcomer (anewcomer@diakon-swan.org).

Previous Agency Affiliation (PAA) Requests

PAA Requests are also processed manually by PAE data analysts. Therefore, results are not available immediately; affiliates must wait for the request to be processed. If a family has another family record in the SWAN Portal, the PAE data analyst will merge or link the records as appropriate before generating the PAA results. If you see PAA results showing no records when you know otherwise, or if you have any other inquiries about PAA requests, contact your SWAN RTA or PAE Family Coordinator Alexandra Newcomer (anewcomer@diakon-swan.org).

Matching Event Survey for Network Use

PAE has developed a series of matching event surveys that we would like to offer to the network. We have separate surveys designed for families, youth and workers who attend matching events.

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If you request to use these surveys, we will send you a unique link and QR code to collect data via our SurveyMonkey account. You can share these with the appropriate groups at your event. Responses are anonymous but will be linked to specific events. We will provide you with your results to help assess the effectiveness of your event, including follow-up on whether any potential matches were made.

Over time, PAE will accumulate anonymous data from across the state and provide more comprehensive feedback. Stay tuned for more detailed information and instructions in February. Together, we can enhance the quality of our events and do our best for youth in need of permanency.

Information-Sharing Tips

We always want to ensure our youth are represented in the best possible light. While we encourage sharing specifics in narratives and flyers, there's also a tension about *how much* detail to include.

The PAE coordinator team asks that you not only double-check the spelling/punctuation, but also the appropriateness of listing movies/television shows that the youth report as their favorites. We do not allow specific video games to be listed, but instead include the game type (e.g., not "Her favorite game is Minecraft," but "She enjoys playing world-building and exploring games."). We don't allow listing of movies or television programs that have explicit/strong sexual content or are otherwise rated "mature" or above (e.g., not "She enjoys watching Euphoria," but "She enjoys watching psychological and reality-based television.")

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact a PAE coordinator.

Practice Spotlight: Continuing Lifebook Work After Child Preparation Ends

A Lifebook is a foundational tool in the Child Preparation process that helps youth understand and make sense of their life story. Created *with* the youth, a Lifebook is a personalized record of their past and present experiences, as well as their future hopes and expectations for permanency. It may include photos, artwork, writings, memorabilia and reflections that honor important events, relationships and milestones. By preserving memories and providing age-appropriate explanations, Lifebooks help youth process grief and loss, answer questions about their history and identity and develop a coherent personal narrative.

Lifebook work is an ongoing and evolving process. As the SWAN Child Preparation Unit of Service comes to an end, it is essential to plan for how this

work will continue. Strategies for planning ongoing Lifebook work include:

- End each Child Preparation session by identifying ways the youth can continue or revisit Lifebook work independently, helping prepare them to carry the work forward.
- Help the youth identify a trusted person with whom they can continue Lifebook work and share meaningful conversations about their past, present and future.
- Involve caretakers such as foster parents, pre-adoptive parents or birth family members in Child Preparation sessions so they understand the Lifebook process and can continue the work with the youth.

Strategies for continuing Lifebook work can be documented in the Child Preparation Plan and updated as needed. While approaches will vary based on each youth's needs and circumstances, the key is ensuring Lifebook work continues beyond the end of services as a meaningful part of the youth's permanency journey. For questions or support with Lifebook continuity planning, contact your SWAN program technical assistant.

Authorized Representative (AR) Support Group Meeting

The next AR Support Group Meeting will be held virtually on April 20, 2026 from 10 am – 12:00 pm. This support group is for Authorized Representatives to support them in doing adoption searches in accordance with Act 101.

The Zoom link is: <https://zoom.us/j/96986588826>

Any questions can be directed to Central Region Technical Assistance Division Manager Kelly Weston at kweston@diakon-swan.org or 717-580-5241.

SWAN Prime Contract

200 Corporate Center Drive Suite 100B

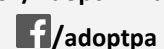
PO Box 959

Camp Hill, PA 17011

Ph: 717-236-8490 | Fax: 717-236-8510

www.diakon-swan.org

www.dhs.pa.gov/AdoptPAkids



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

Older Youth Services Certification Series

The purpose of the Older Youth Services Certification series is to provide individuals working with adolescents with the knowledge, skills, techniques, and confidence to engage and empower youth involved in the child welfare system. The courses within this series include foundational level information for working with older youth, and the certification track is a total of 13 credit hours. Courses will be offered mainly online via E-Learn with one instructor-led training. This certification series is available for all agencies and all position levels to enroll.

Courses include:

- Independent Living Services: An Overview – Module 1 Purpose and Policy (online) – 2 credit hours (PLEASE NOTE: This module is a prerequisite to the instructor-led session.)
- Independent Living Services: An Overview – Module 2 Adolescent Issues: Risk and Resiliency (online) – 2 credit hours (PLEASE NOTE: This module is a prerequisite to the instructor-led session.)
- Independent Living Services: Engaging Older Youth (online prerequisite) – 1 credit hour
- Independent Living Services: Engaging Older Youth (instructor-led session) – 6 credit hours, available in person or remote
- Implicit Bias in Child Protection (online) – 2 credit hours

To register for this certification series, you can self-enroll in the courses or contact the Registration Account at cwtpreg@pitt.edu.

YAB and Citizen Review Panel

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) proudly serves as Pennsylvania's fourth Citizen Review Panel (CRP). Through its regional boards, YAB drives forward critical initiatives that amplify youth's voices, influence child welfare practices, and empower foster youth to build pathways toward independence.

For the 2026–2027 year, recommendations by each region will center on:

Southwest – Parenting Youth (continuation with a focus on fathers)

Goal: Develop a dedicated section on the YAB website with resources for fathers in care and their rights. These materials will also be printed and distributed to high schools and other community

locations.

Northeast – Family Connections

Goal: Strengthening sibling and family bonds by helping youth maintain meaningful relationships.

Southeast – What to Expect After Adoption

Goal: Create a questionnaire to make video interviews of adopted youth to share adoption success stories. A brochure will also be created, including phone numbers for adoption networks and crisis centers.

South Central – Employment Resources

Goal: Create a comprehensive packet of job resources for youth ages 14–23 across Pennsylvania. The packet will be available on the Valley Youth House and YAB websites.

NYTD Council and Youth Engagement

YAB is expanding youth awareness and involvement in the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). A presentation will be recorded and distributed in January 2026 to counties and regions to educate youth on the importance of participating in NYTD surveys. The NYTD Council is looking to engage youth at the local level to ensure their voices are heard with the recorded presentation.

For more information or to express interest in YAB or the NYTD Council, please contact Carl Butler CLB379@pitt.edu.

YAB Consultants

The Child Welfare Resource Center is seeking YAB Regional Consultants for the Northwest, South Central, and North Central regions. The purpose of the YAB consultants is to ensure grassroots advocacy efforts for older youth initiatives are supported at the local and regional levels. The consultants coordinate all activities and communication for the regional Youth Advisory Boards, including quarterly meetings, statewide YAB meetings, community service events, and legislative initiatives. Each regional YAB is allocated funding to support advocacy efforts within its region. The consultants assist with managing the funding, including documents, stipends, reimbursements, and other purchase reimbursable items. Additionally, the consultants provide mentoring and coordinate professional development opportunities for the regional YAB. Please contact Cindy Gore at lcg7@pitt.edu for additional information.

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-795-9048 | www.payab.pitt.edu

Pennsylvania CFSR Round 4 Update

Statewide Assessment

- The Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Child Welfare Resource Center, convened a Statewide Assessment Committee (SAC) to evaluate and assess Pennsylvania's child welfare system in achieving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes according to the criteria established by the Children's Bureau and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).
- The SAC included system and community partners as well as those with lived experience and county children and youth agency staff.
- The SAC reviewed and discussed seven Outcomes related to Safety, Permanency, and Well-being as well as seven Systemic Factors as part of the CFSR process. The data reviewed and gathered through the SAC helped inform Pennsylvania's Round 4 CFSR Statewide Assessment.
- The SAC convened monthly from March through August 2025.
- The Round 4 CFSR Statewide Assessment will be submitted to the ACF in February 2026.



CFSR Pilot Reviews

- *Provided an opportunity for PA to demonstrate the ability to successfully implement a state-led CFSR case review,*
 - *Fulfilled ACF's Round 4 CFSR state-led case review requirement, and;*
 - *Data from the Pilot was used to inform PA's performance in the required Round 4 CFSR Statewide Assessment.*
- ✓ Philadelphia County's Pilot case review occurred from July 14-18, 2025.
 - ✓ Warren and Forest County's Pilot case review occurred from August 18-22, 2025.
 - Warren and Forest County served as the PA's first joinder for a CFSR case review, providing the opportunity to review cases in a smaller sized county.
 - ✓ Franklin County's Pilot case reviews occurred from September 15-19, 2025.

Special thanks to our CFSR Pilot Counties!

Onsite County Announcement

The CFSR Project Team is happy to share that the following counties have been selected to participate in the Round 4 CFSR Onsite Case Reviews

Congratulations 🎉 to PA's Round 4 CFSR Onsite Counties!

Centre, Fayette, Jefferson, Lancaster,

Montgomery, Northampton, and Philadelphia

We appreciate the ongoing commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement in PA and the CFSR Project Team looks forward to our continued collaboration!

State-Led Case Review Proposal

- ✓ PA received approval of our State- Led proposal from ACF on October 23, 2025.
- ✓ CFSR Round 4 on-site case reviews are scheduled to occur from April through September of 2026.



The **CFSR Acronym List** is available at: [CFSR Acronym List.docx](#)



📧 If you have any questions, please reach out to the CFSR Project Team at pacfsr@pitt.edu

ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project

A project of the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law

The **ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project** improves school experiences and outcomes for children in foster care to promote permanency and life success.

Key Principles

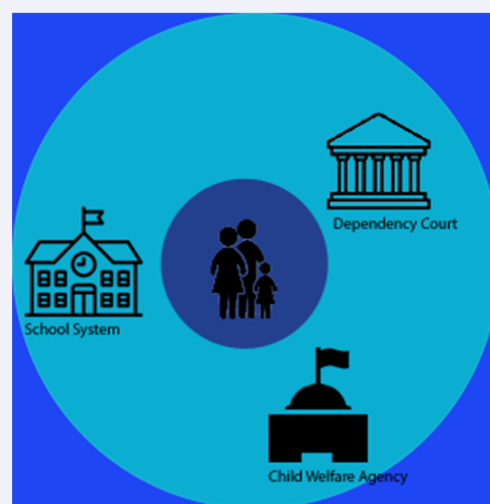
1. **School stability strengthens placement stability** and often speeds permanency for children and families.
2. **School success guides life success.** Focusing on the full educational experience (including needs and supports) improves school and life outcomes.
3. **Child welfare agencies, schools, and courts must work together** to create a support network for students in foster care.

How the Project Helps

The Education Barriers project can:

- ✓ **Identify strengths and challenges** child welfare agency, education, and court systems experience supporting education success for children in care.
- ✓ **Develop strategies, practices, and policies** to address challenges and improve education success for children in care.
- ✓ **Provide targeted technical assistance** to address needs and train educators, child welfare staff, and the legal community.
- ✓ **Collaborate on a long-term reform strategy** to address barriers and needs and implement reforms (see Full project components, right).

A Collaborative Approach



Full project components:

1. Identify education barriers.
2. Recommend and implement changes.
3. Work with child welfare, education, and court systems to develop and implement new policies and procedures.
4. Monitor improvements and changes.
5. Measure and report project results.

Get started today

The ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project can work with your jurisdiction to promote permanency for children in foster care by addressing children's education needs. Contact us to get started or to learn more.



Kathleen McNaught, 202/662-1966



Kathleen.McNaught@americanbar.org



<http://www.abaeducationbarriers.org>

ABA Permanency Barriers Project

A project of the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law

The ABA Permanency Barriers Project works with you to reduce the time children spend in foster care before achieving permanency.

Principles

1. Permanency begins on Day 1.
2. Small steps add up to change.
3. Full stakeholder engagement is key to realize and maintain system reform.

Project Approach

1 Focus on System Change

ABA staff help local stakeholders develop individualized county action plans. The action plans are based on a thorough assessment of needs, which includes:

- Case file review
- Court observation
- Data analysis
- Focus groups with stakeholders

2 County-Driven, County-Owned

Each jurisdiction encounters unique challenges. We form a county Advisory Board and issue-based subcommittees made up of lead decisionmakers, including:

- Child welfare agency administrators and staff
- Behavioral health providers
- Juvenile and family court judges
- School administrators
- Agency, parent, and children's attorneys
- Others, as identified by county

3 ABA as Neutral Facilitator and Strategic Partner

ABA staff are on site monthly working to develop and implement reforms.

- Our attorneys bring extensive firsthand knowledge and national perspective to guide your county.
- We ensure all stakeholders join the effort as equal partners.
- We focus on system barriers and engagement between the legal and nonlegal communities at both the county and state level.
- We provide individualized attention, which can include refining court and agency procedures, providing legal analysis, and conducting trainings.

4 Improved Outcomes

At the end of this two-year project, you will see:

- More efficient and effective pathways to permanency for every case;
- A reduction of time in foster care for children in your county; and
- Improved communication, network building, and stakeholder collaboration.

Measurable Results

At the end of the two-year project each county receives a final project report that summarizes results and provides recommendations to sustain system change. To date, the project has:

- ✓ served **55** different counties in **four** states,
- ✓ reduced the time children spend in foster care in all four states by an average of **nine months**,
- ✓ realized a positive impact on more than **3,000** children,
- ✓ saved counties and states over **\$30 million** in foster care costs.

Targeted Technical Assistance

As an alternative to the two-year model, we provide targeted technical assistance on permanency matters through on-site trainings, developing local protocols, facilitating meetings, and other solutions to address local challenges. ABA technical assistance can range from a one-day training to a multi-month engagement.

Get Started Today

The ABA Permanency Barriers Project can work with your county to promote permanency for children in foster care.

For more information, contact:
Heidi Redlich Epstein, 202-662-1725
Heidi.Epstein@americanbar.org

This project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families.