

**Statewide Adoption and Permanency**

**Network *and* Independent Living Services**

**2015 Spring Quarterly Meeting**

**Office of Children, Youth and Families Updates**

[**Protecting**](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/) **Pennsylvania’s Children from Abuse and Neglect:**

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed the website, [KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/), to serve as the hub for information related to critical components impacting child protection including a link for mandated reporters to make reports of suspected child abuse electronically, training on child abuse recognition and reporting, information related to clearances and general information related to child protection.

The Department has also collaborated with the University of Pittsburgh’s Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to develop a free web-based training on recognizing and reporting child abuse. This training is approved in accordance with Act 126 of 2012 and Act 31 of 2104 for mandated and permissive reporters and can be found at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/).

Questions about the new Child Protective Services law may be emailed to

ra-pwcpslquestions@pa.gov.

**Continuous Quality Improvement:**

The Round 5 Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) are in full swing this spring!  The schedule for upcoming reviews is as follows:

**Union County**  May 13-15, 2015;

**Beaver County** May 19-21, 2015;

**Fulton County** May 19-21, 2015;

**Schuylkill County**  July 2015;

**Mifflin County** November 4-6, 2015;

**Lebanon County** Fall 2015.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a QSR reviewer, you can download the QSR reviewer brochure through the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center website.  Those who would like to serve as a reviewer can now sign up using the new online reviewer application by emailing qsreview@pitt.edu or by calling 717-795-9048. Please contact Natalie Perrin at nperrin@pa.gov or at (717) 783-7376 for more information on CQI.

**Chafee Education and Training Grant Program:**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2015-2016 school year and directions on how to apply are available online at: <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>.  The 2015-2016 maximum ETG award is tentatively set at $4,500 per student, not to exceed their cost of attendance.

Please continue to spread the word about the ETG for youth who are, or were, in out of home placement or adopted after age 16.  Youth ARE NOT required to participate in a formal IL program to be eligible to apply and receive an award.  Timely completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Pennsylvania State Grant and ETG applications is important.

All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application.

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you work with youth receiving services who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programs at the Foster Care to Success website: [www.fc2sprograms.org](http://www.fc2sprograms.org).  Each state has its own individual application process.

If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact David Derbes at dderbes@pa.gov or at (717) 705-2911.

**Higher Education Financial Preparation for 2014-2015:**The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available online for the 2014-2015 academic year.  The website address is [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students must complete (or update) the FAFSA to be eligible for federal and state financial aid.  Prospective students do not need to have finalized their school of choice however they must list their school preferences. Adding or changing schools after the application is submitted is a simple, online process.  Staff and adults are encouraged to assist youth as necessary and to inform them how to answer the dependency related questions, specifically question number 53 (Were you in foster care or a dependent ward of the court?).

**Medicaid Expansion:**

Pennsylvania is moving to a traditional Medicaid expansion.  The Medicaid expansion will consolidate the three benefit plan options included in *Healthy PA* into one streamlined adult benefit package.  The new adult benefit package will be for adults ages 21 and older and will be similar in many ways to the traditional HealthChoices package. The Department will implement the new adult benefit package April 27 of this year by transitioning adults who were previously enrolled in MA in December 2014 from the Private Coverage Option (PCO) to Medicaid, closing the front door to the PCO for all new applicants, and moving current adult Medicaid recipients to the adult benefit package. The remaining PCO adults will be transitioned by September 1, 2015, and the process will be complete by Sept. 30, 2015, when the Department and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  CMS will terminate the *Healthy PA* Demonstration Waiver.

**SWAN Media Schedule:**

SWAN’s media campaign will continue statewide via online audio advertisements on Pandora and Radio PA Network throughout National Foster Care month in May. Print advertisements will also be published in the Philadelphia Tribune, the Philadelphia Gay News, the New Pittsburgh Courier, Equal Magazine and Pittsburgh Out Online in May. An online paid word search campaign continues to run on Yahoo, Google, Facebook and MSN.

Agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families as a result of this media campaign.

**Waiting Child Segments:**

SWAN’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 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate, *Val’s Kids* is aired on WHTM abc 27 in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE TV 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 child you would like featured on KDKA’s, ***Waiting Child***, please contact Ja-Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council at jjones@3riversadopt.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM’s, ***Val’s Kids***, please contact Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE’s, ***A Little Love,*** please contact Jill Ferraro Bruce at jferrarobruce@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-7292.

**SWAN ListServ through Google Groups:**The SWAN ListServ through Google Groups **is comprised of county children and youth agency workers and SWAN affiliate agency workers. The goal of the group is to facilitate special needs adoptions throughout PA.  All information posted on this site is confidential.  Anyone wishing to join this group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency or SWAN affiliate agency. If interested, please contact Joe Warrick by email at** jwarrick@pa.gov or at **(717) 214-6765.**

**SWAN-IL Network Newsletter:**

Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague are doing to promote improved outcomes for PA’s foster youth. If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles, success stories, matching events or ideas to Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242. Pictures are always a great addition to any article. You can find the latest and past editions of this newsletter at [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org) under the Network Newsletter link.

**SWAN Online:**

Be sure to check out SWAN’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/adoptpa](http://www.facebook.com/adoptpa), and our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/adoptpakids](http://www.youtube.com/adoptpakids).