

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

OCYF Staff Update

Jennifer Brown has accepted a human services program specialist position with the Division of Policy. Jenn began her career in the Commonwealth as an income maintenance caseworker in Montour County and went on to become a human services program specialist in the Office of Medical Assistance Programs appeals unit. Prior to working for the Commonwealth, Jenn worked as a Children and Youth caseworker with Northumberland County and in direct care with Northwestern Academy. Jenn is responsible for Medicaid-related and cross-system policy and initiatives for foster and adoptive children and youth such as, the Psychotropic Medication Dashboard Report, Affordable Care Act, Mental Health Planning Council, Medical Assistance Advisory Committee, Diversity Task Force and Secondary Transition Team, and many more. Jenn will utilize her expertise to ensure foster and adoptive children and youth receive the services necessary to ensure their health and well-being. Jenn can be reached at jennifbrow@pa.gov.

Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2019 – 2020 academic year is available on the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's (PHEAA) website. The application and directions for applying can be found online at: www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the students cost of attendance.

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

Please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797 with questions about current Chafee applications or a youth's status. If youth have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov or at 717-214-7385.

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, 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 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 Robert Brockman at rbrockman@diakon-swan.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE's *A Little Love*, please contact Rachel Paashaus at rpaashaus@diakon-swan.org.

SWAN Media

SWAN's #MeetTheKids media campaign is airing on network and cable television in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg/Lancaster markets through June 30, 2019, along with online media ads on Google, Hulu, Facebook, Instagram and Cumulus.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families. Please contact Teresa Musser for additional information at temusser@pa.gov or 717-214-7385.

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 to 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 by email at bwhary@diakon-swan.org or 717-558-1223.

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). Pennsylvania is currently in Cohort 3 with 19-year old Follow-up Surveys. Counties can log onto www.GetNYTD to see the 19-year-old youth who need to be surveyed during this reporting period. The deadline for collecting survey information is September 30, 2019. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at temusser@pa.gov or at 717-214-7385.

Medical Assistance Bulletin Released Updating Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule

On April 22, 2019, the Office of Medical Assistance Programs issued Bulletin 99-19-01: 2019 Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule. This bulletin updated the immunization schedule for children and youth aged 18 or younger. The bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the Medicaid Program and can be found at the following link: dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/bulletin_admin/c_289176.pdf

Quality Service Reviews

The Quality Service Review (QSR) is one critical component of Pennsylvania's child welfare Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system. The QSR involves a team of certified QSR reviewers gathering information directly from families, children and service team members so that they can assess the current safety, permanency and well-being of a child/youth while also evaluating the system's ability to implement Pennsylvania's Practice Model, which provides a basis for promoting and strengthening best practice. QSRs will occur during the fall of 2019 in Mifflin, Blair and Cumberland Counties. Information on QSR training and onsite dates, as well as information on how to sign up to volunteer as a reviewer can be found on the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center website at: <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CQI.htm>.

Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Criminal History Fee Increase

As of January 1, 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has increased the cost for the federal criminal history clearance to \$23.85 for employees and \$22.60 for volunteers.

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 2017 and has developed a program improvement plan to address outcomes where Pennsylvania did not meet federal performance standards. Pennsylvania has conducted case reviews in Butler, Mercer, and Centre counties as part of the program improvement plan monitoring phase of the federal CFSR process. Lycoming, Northampton, Philadelphia and Lehigh will be conducting their case reviews now through the end of July. Information on CFSR reviewer training and onsite dates, as well as information on how to sign up to volunteer as a reviewer can be found on the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center website at: <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CFSR.htm>.

Act 54/Plans of Safe Care

The Pennsylvania Departments of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Health, and Human Services have issued the Pennsylvania Plan of Safe Care Guidance to provide practice considerations related to identification of infants and caregivers affected by substance use and substance use disorders, parameters related to development of plans of safe care including plan elements, development, and monitoring. To assist county children and youth agencies considering the potential practice and fiscal impacts related to serving infants and their families impacted by substance use and substance use disorders, the Governor's Institute is hosting five regional, in-person, two-day work sessions for county planning teams responsible for implementing plans of safe care for infants affected by prenatal substance exposure, including alcohol, and their families. If you have questions related to Act 54 or Plans of Safe Care, please contact Eric Walters at eriwalters@pa.gov.

Mandated Reporter Training

Mandated reporter training is crucial in the identification and prevention of child abuse and neglect. To help ensure as many mandated reporters are trained as possible, OCYF contracts with three organizations to provide either in-person or online mandated reporter training. In just the past year, over 200,000 mandated reporters have been provided training through these organization.

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) offers in-person trainings to any mandated reporter groups, while the Pennsylvania American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), who also offers in-person trainings, only serves medical professionals, school nurses, and emergency management services. The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) offers an online training course for any mandated reporter or others needing to complete a mandated reporter training course. Information on how to schedule an in-person training or complete the online training is outlined below:

1. PFSA - www.pa-fsa.org
Haven Evans, hevans@pa-fsa.org,
(800) 448-4906
2. AAP - www.pascan.org
Teresa Olsen, tolsen@paaap.org,
(866) 823-7226
3. CWRC - www.pacwrc.pitt.edu
Send request to cwtpreg@pitt.edu,
(717) 795-9048

If there are general questions regarding these trainings, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at wildickins@pa.gov or (717) 787-2726.

Accurint

Accurint is an online search engine to which every county has access. Accurint should be used as part of diligent search efforts to find family or kin for children and families served by the child welfare system.

For more information about Accurint, 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.

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Referrals

While the end of state fiscal year (SFY) 2018-2019 quickly approaches, some Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB) dollars from this SFY are not yet spent. We encourage counties to continue to make referrals for children and families who need services.

For referrals to be applied to the FY 2018-2019 NBPB, counties must submit referrals to the SWAN prime contractor by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, June 30, 2019. Any referrals received after this cut-off time will be held and then processed in FY 2019-2020.

If your county has exhausted its SWAN FY 2018-2019 NBPB dollars, do not stop referring. The Office of Children, Youth and Families has authorized reallocation of these funds among counties so the use of these dollars can be maximized. The SWAN prime contractor will continue to process referrals received for FY 2018-2019 until the NBPB dollars are exhausted.

SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet Updated

The 2019 edition of the SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet includes up-to-date information to help ensure agencies are in compliance with both new and existing laws related to diligent search.

With every revision, a committee thoroughly reviews information included in the packet. This extensive process ensures searchers have the most effective resources available and that resources are organized to streamline the search process for your particular timelines and requirements. So whether you are a seasoned searcher or this is your first time searching, you will be able to pick up the packet and begin your process from page one. A checklist is always included in the Attachments section to help guide your search and later support your documentation requirements for courts.

LSI continues to strive to help Pennsylvania comply with national guidelines for search efforts. We have included important links to other helpful documents to assist you with your search, such as Family Design Resources' *Indian Child Welfare Act Search Guide* and the *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual*.

Please visit the SWAN LSI Diligent Search page at diakon-swan.org to download and print the 2019 edition of the SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet today. If you have questions about your search, please email your inquiry to the SWAN LSI Warmline at lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org.

SWAN Legal Services Initiative: A Decade of Growth and Progress

Beginning in state fiscal year (SFY) 2009-10, County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) could request SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) paralegals within their Needs Based Plan and Budget. This change was due to the state's support of counties to fully realize program benefits and served as a catalyst for rapid, widespread program growth. The following are milestones that highlight LSI's growth over the last ten years:

- LSI paralegal positions grew from 18 to more than 240;
- Expanded support from 14 to all 67 counties by SFY 2015-16;
- Completed numerous updates to the *Diligent Search Packet*;
- Partnered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange to release *Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide*;
- Collaborated in the development of the *Incarceration Resource Manual*;
- Streamlined and integrated data collection systems with the SWAN Portal; and
- Provided diligent search activities to assist in the administration of National Youth in Transition Database surveys.

In the last five years, LSI has:

- Completed more than 74,000 diligent search activities;
- Drafted more than 220,000 court documents; and
- Impacted more than 81,000 children with at least one LSI activity.

SWAN LSI remains focused on achieving program outcomes that contribute to expediting permanency for children and families in Pennsylvania.

Child Preparation Recipes for Success

Are you in search of a new Child Preparation activity? The SWAN prime contractor will soon release the updated **Child Preparation Recipes for Success**. Thirty brand new activities and 33 original "recipes" are included. The **Child Preparation Recipes for Success** will be available on the SWAN Permanency Toolkit at swantoolkit.org this summer. Stay tuned!

Incarceration Resource Manual Tool for Case-Planning

Working with incarcerated parents who are involved in the child welfare system can be challenging due to differences among individual county prisons' policies, procedures and available services. The *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual* (IRM) compiles county prison policies and procedures into a single, comprehensive document.

This manual contains entries for each Pennsylvania county prison. It is intended to be a tool to assist caseworkers and supervisors in their case-planning with incarcerated parents, as well as be a resource to support the counties' efforts to engage with these parties. The second edition provides links to additional resources, including state and federal facilities.

The manual can be downloaded from the *Incarceration Resource Manual* page at diakon-swan.org. Please send any updates about county prison policies and procedures and questions or concerns to lsi-irmupdates@diakon-swan.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2019 Fall Quarterly Meetings

Scranton — October 2, 2019

Clarion — October 23, 2019

Monroeville — October 24, 2019

Philadelphia — October 30, 2019

Lansdale — October 31, 2019

Harrisburg — November 5, 2019

2020 SWAN/IL Winter Statewide Meeting

January 22-23, 2020

Penn Stater Conference Center
215 Innovation Blvd.
State College, Pennsylvania 16803

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

National Adoption Month Preparation

Throughout the month of November, county and affiliate agencies have hosted wonderful events to celebrate National Adoption Month. These events raise awareness about the need for adoptive families for children and youth in out-of-home care, celebrate the creation of forever families through adoption and seek to match waiting children with their forever families.

The SWAN prime contractor is currently updating two resources designed to help counties and affiliates plan National Adoption Month events. The *Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide* and *Adoption Awareness and Matching Events: Planning for Success* will be available on diakon-swan.org soon, in anticipation of National Adoption Month.

PAE-Registered Children and Out-of-State Families

According to SWAN Portal data, as of May 2019, 42 percent of families seeking to adopt a child in Pennsylvania are, first, from other states and, secondly, also the most willing to accept older children. Children who are 13 years of age and older are the largest population of waiting children registered with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE). As a result, caseworkers for older youth receive many inquiries from out-of-state families.

If you are working with older youth, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) will guide placement with out-of-state families. The ICPC is a statutory agreement among all 50 states, including the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, that provides for the movement and safe placement of children between states. It helps connect child welfare agencies throughout the country to ensure the safety of out-of-state placements. More information about the ICPC can be found on the SWAN Toolkit at swantoolkit.org.

SWAN Helpline Welcomes New Staff

In April, the SWAN Helpline welcomed new technical specialist, Missy Wellington. Missy holds a B.A. degree in speech pathology from Edinboro University. She has a diverse professional background having worked in business management, telecommunications, youth tobacco prevention management, and school lunch program administration training where she was a technical assistant for Pennsylvania schools.

Missy grew up in the snow-belt near Erie and currently lives in Boiling Springs with her wife, Laurie, their pug, Olive, and cat visitor, Bruce. Please join us in welcoming Missy to the SWAN Helpline!

Upcoming Units of Service Meetings

Locations:

Central Region - Diakon/FDR, Large Conference Room

Southeast Region - Church on the Mall

Western Region - Family Pathways, Chimney Hall

Northeast Region - Thomas P. Saxton, Auditorium

July 25, 2019

Units of Service Post-permanency Meetings

Sept. 2019 (Date TBA)

Units of Service Programming Meetings

Oct. 4, 2019

Units of Service Post-permanency Meetings

November 1, 2019

Units of Service Programming Meetings

Dec. 5, 2019

Units of Service Post-permanency Meetings

All times: 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



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**

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Positions Open

The Pennsylvania YAB is comprised of a statewide board, six regional boards as well as local boards. Currently, we are looking to fill YAB consultant positions for the Northwest and Southwest regions of the state. These are paid positions that provide support to the regional boards, including coordinating meetings, offering technical assistance and administrative tasks.

If you are interested in learning more about these positions, please contact Cindy Gore (lcg7@pitt.edu) at the Child Welfare Resource Center. Also, if you have youth interested in joining a local or regional YAB, please contact Marvin Butts (mdb122@pitt.edu), and he will connect you to the appropriate coordinator.

Independent Living (IL) Trainings (available online and in-person)

The CWRC recently revised the IL training series. Two of the three modules are now available online through the Resource Center’s E-Learn site at www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/ELEARN.htm.

The third module, Engaging Older Youth, is an in-person training that involves 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.

- Independent Living (IL) Services Module 1: Purpose and Policy (online)
- Independent Living (IL) Services Module 2: Adolescent Issues: Risk and Resiliency (online)
- Independent Living (IL) Services Module 3: Engaging Older Youth (in-person simulation)

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)
403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-795-9048
www.payab.pitt.edu

Save the Dates!

Please take note of some of our upcoming events and save the date:

June 27 – June 28, 2019

YAB Leadership Summit held at CWRC

The YAB will unveil a recruitment brochure they developed as a resource for agencies and resource parents who are looking to become a permanent option for older youth.

The YAB will also share a questionnaire they developed to assist youth in the introduction process to new families. A panel of older youth and resource families that foster older youth will share their experiences.

August 5 – August 9, 2019

Older Youth Retreat held at the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown campus

Registration is currently open. Please contact your county identified IL coordinator to register interested youth.



Visit the YAB website at www.payab.pitt.edu for more details about upcoming events.