

**Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network *and***

**Independent Living Services**

**2016 Summer Statewide Meeting**

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

**New OCYF staff:**

Julie Ward joined the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), Division of Operations as a Human Services Program Specialist in April 2016.  Julie will be providing support to the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) unit.   She will be involved in the Quality Services Reviews and PA’s federal CFSR.  Julie spent the last five years working for the OCYF Bureau of Juvenile Justice System at South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit.  Prior to that, she worked for private agencies in the juvenile justice field for nine years.  Julie can be reached at julward@pa.gov or (717) 772-7044.

**Safe Haven:**

You may have noticed a new look on the Safe Haven website, [www.secretsafe.org](http://www.secretsafe.org), if not, please check it out and let us know what you think. Additional changes to the website are coming, including updated information, new posters and brochures.

 Since, 2002, a total of 28 newborns have been relinquished to hospitals across Pennsylvania, but we need the counties’ help in tracking these totals. With recent changes to the Newborn

Protection Act, please contact our office if you have questions about how this

affects your county and/or where to obtain relinquishment forms. If your

agency has not provided relinquishment forms on any Safe Haven newborns, please be sure to do as soon as possible.

Safe Haven questions can be directed to Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or (717) 787-2726.

**Accurint:**

Accurint is a useful tool for obtaining an individual’s address and phone number (landline), but did you know that you can search for cell phone numbers too? By running a separate search called, Real-Time Phones, you can access phone records in real time. Try it out and greatly improve your search efforts!

For more information about Accurint search features, including how to use the Real-Time Phone feature, contact Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or (717) 787-2726.

 **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 (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 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 (717) 214-6765. **Credit Reporting Requirements:**

Credit reporting requirements changed in September 2015. All youth in foster care, ages 14 and older, must receive their credit report annually and be given a copy of their credit history upon exiting care.

If you are having trouble obtaining a credit reports from Equifax, Experian or TransUnion or have any credit reporting questions, contact Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or (717) 787-2726.

**PA Community on Transition Conference:**This year’s PA Community on Transition Conference, titled “*Unlocking Potential: Promoting Strengths and Inspiring Success”* will be held July 20-22, 2016 at the Penn Stater Conference Center.  The primary purpose of this conference is to empower, educate and provide transition age youth with disabilities, and their families, the opportunity to learn about effective practices and resources that will enable them to explore and advocate for their future as they prepare for transition to adulthood.  The conference also seeks to expand the capacity of schools, agencies and communities, which support these youth and their families, to obtain positive post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles.

For more information about the conference or to learn about available scholarships for youth and families, visit (Registration deadline is July 8, 2016): <http://www.secondarytransition.org/event/565dd0cf140ba0225c8b45d0>

**SWAN Media:**

We anticipate that the filming of our next round of the media campaign, *#MeetTheKids*, will begin sometime this fall. The current campaign has been airing on network and cable television advertisements in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg/Lancaster markets and will end on 6/26/2016, along with online media ads on Pandora Radio, Google/Yahoo/MSN searches and Facebook.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families. Please contact Joe Warrick for additional information at jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**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 (717) 558-1242.
* If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE’s, ***A Little Love,*** please contact Jane Johnston at jjohnston@diakon-swan.org or (717) 231-5362

**Child and Family Services Review (CFSR):**

PA continues preparations for the upcoming federal CFSR, scheduled to occur between the months of April and September in 2017.  The CFSR measures the safety, permanency and well-being of children through an in-depth review of 65 cases, which, for PA’s review, will evaluate practice and case activity that is occurring now (beginning in April 2016 up to the start of the case review). The CFSR also evaluates state performance using national safety and permanency data indicators and by having states complete a self-assessment.  PA’s self-assessment will be due to the federal Administration for Children and Families in February 2017.

With regards to permanency, the CFSR looks at state performance related to two main outcomes:

* Permanency Outcome #1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
* Permanency Outcome #2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children

The national data indicators for permanency are as follows:

* Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care
* Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12 to 23 months
* Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or longer
* Re-entry to foster care in 12 months
* Placement stability

PA currently meets the national standard for 3 of the 5 national permanency data indicators.  PA currently is below the national standard for permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care and re-entry to foster care in 12 months.  OCYF will continue to keep our partners informed of our performance related to CFSR outcomes and measures as we work to complete our self-assessment and conduct the case reviews in 2017.

**Older Youth Retreat:**

The 2016 Older Youth Retreat Steering Committee is finalizing plans for this year’s retreat, *The Past is a Place of Reference, Not a Place of Residence,* on August 8-12, 2016. Once again, this popular week long retreat will be held at the University of Pittsburgh’s Johnstown Campus and serves as a wonderful opportunity for youth to meet new friends, work together, experience new things and participate in exciting experiences. Deadline for registration is July 8, 2016.

You can keep up with youth activities during the retreat on the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board Facebook page and by following the hashtag *#paretreat2016* on Facebook.

For more information, email Lisa Kessler at lkk20@pitt.edu or visit: <http://www.independentlivingpa.org>

**Youth Ambassadors Needed:**

The Child Welfare Resource Center is currently recruiting Youth Ambassadors. This is a paid internship position open to youth who were in foster care and are currently enrolled in post-secondary education. Youth may apply at pittsource.com. Positions are listed in the Mechanicsburg “campus”. Make sure youth are applying to the correct region. Currently Youth Ambassadors are needed in all regions. Please contact Melissa Moore at mcm141@pitt.edu.

**National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD):**

NYTD implementation is ongoing with the Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), the Served Population (any youth receiving an IL service regardless of age.), and the Follow-up 19 Population collection (period B started April 1, 2016). All counties have been notified of recent changes with Follow-up survey outreach by way of email. PA is working diligently to meet the national standards of youth participation.

NYTD questions can be directed to Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program:**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2016-2017 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 2016-2017 maximum ETG award has yet to be determined (the amount per student in 2015-2016 was $4,750).

All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next

academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application.  Free Application for Federal Student Aid renewal forms must be completed every year.

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or at (717) 214-6765.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) changes**:
Students who will graduate from high school or complete a GED in 2017 can apply for financial aid starting on October 1, 2016 rather than waiting until January of their senior year. This change will allow students to apply for financial aid using actual data rather than estimates at the same time that they typically start to apply for college admission. It’s hoped that students will make more informed college decisions if they have financial aid information at the same time as admissions decisions.

To make that possible, the FAFSA and PHEAA will use the prior year tax return for aid consideration in 2017-18. For example, an application for 2017-18 financial aid will use income from the 2015 tax return. Youth and IL/transition staff should look for financial aid nights in your local area in late spring or early in the fall of 2016 – and be aware that financial aid deadlines for priority processing may change at some colleges and universities. Please note, some funding is available on a first come, first serve basis.

PAY ATTENTION to the deadlines! There are federal and state deadlines, and your colleges may also have a deadline.  August 1, 2016 is the deadline for youth attending college in PA and all first–time applicants enrolled in a community college; business/ trade/technical school; hospital school of nursing; designated Pennsylvania Open-Admission institution; or non-transferable two-year program.

All other applicants must meet the May 1, 2016 deadline.

**SAT Waivers:**
Fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning test and the SAT Subject test are available for *current high school students* who cannot afford to pay the test fees. Please be sure to indicate on the SAT Waiver Request Form which test your youth wishes to take. SAT Waivers are available for students who are *currently* in high school. If a youth already graduated or did not graduate, but received their GED, the College Board will not accept the fee waiver. There are also a limited number of college application fee waivers. If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Melissa Moore at mcm141@pitt.edu.

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