

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Office of Children, Youth and Families Personnel Update

The Office of Children, Youth and Families is pleased to welcome **Rebecca Moore** as a human services program specialist in the Division of Policy. Rebecca graduated from Shippensburg University with a Bachelor of Social Work degree. Before joining OCYF, Rebecca worked at the Dauphin County Assistance Office, Dauphin County Children and Youth and for the Managed Care Organization, PerformCare. Rebecca's work will focus on providing technical assistance and overall policy support as it relates to foster care, kinship care, adoption services, and permanent legal custodianship. She can be reached at rebeccmoor@pa.gov or 717-409-3310.

Ellen Whitesell, Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations, Division of Policy director has retired after 32 years of Commonwealth service. OCYF thanks Ellen for her dedication and efforts in protecting and supporting Pennsylvania's children, youth and families during her career. **Alicia Tyler** is currently serving as acting policy director and can be reached at alt Tyler@pa.gov.

Elysa Springer, Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations, Division of IT and Data Management has been promoted to serve as the director of this division. Elysa has been a member of the OCYF team since November 2007. She started her career with OCYF working at ChildLine as a Hotline caseworker and supervisor until transitioning to the Systems and Data Management Unit in 2015. After working for a year as a business analyst primarily supporting the ChildLine Hotline and county children and youth agencies, Elysa became the systems section supervisor. Elysa can be reached at elyspringe@pa.gov.

Dan Lawler, Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operation, Division of Operations joins the team on as the director of the division on Monday, October 19, 2020. Dan has extensive experience working in child welfare and human services and has worked for OCYF, Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services and private providers that serve adjudicated delinquent

youth. His expertise includes trauma-informed care, specifically the Sanctuary Model. Dan can be reached at danielawle@pa.gov.

Michele Walsh, Ph.D., LSW joins OCYF as the executive assistant within the deputy secretary's office for Children, Youth and Families. Michele is a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) with extensive educational experience, including a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Work from Widener University, a Master of Social Work degree from Temple University, a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Millersville University and Chatham University's Infant Mental Health Certificate. She has worked in the field of human services for 18 years, most recently with the Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health in the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Michele also serves as an adjunct professor for the Center of Social Work Education at Widener University and has previously served in the role of program manager for the Pennsylvania Infant/Early Childhood Consultation Project under the PA Key on behalf of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Additionally, Michele is both a volunteer and a founding member of the Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health.

Southeast Regional Director **Caitlin Robinson, LSW** joins us with over 15 years of experience in human services, including a strong background of practical experience in children's services. Most recently, she served as the executive vice president of child and family services with A Second Chance, Inc. in Philadelphia. Additionally, she has worked nationally to provide technical assistance and training to the child welfare systems in California and West Virginia. Caitlin is a Licensed Social Worker in the state of Pennsylvania and holds her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, New York and Master of Social Work from Marywood University in Scranton, with an additional focus on administration. Caitlin also serves on the board of Galaei, a queer Latin social justice organization, and supports other professionals as a co-founder of Compass Consulting, an organization that supports positive direction through the power of engagement and collaboration.

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Personnel Update (Cont'd.)

Caitlin is an advocate for children and families both within and outside of the child welfare system and this passion is reflected in her work to empower and support children and their families.

Brian Waugh has been promoted to director for the northeast region. Brian has over 19 years of experience in our Northeast Regional Office and another 13 years of experience with Luzerne County Children and Youth. In addition to over 31 years of experience in service to children, youth and families, Brian has 19 years' experience teaching in the Sociology Department at Wilkes University as an Adjunct Professor. Brian earned his bachelor's degree from Wilkes and his master's degree from the University of Scranton.

National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. This is a terrific opportunity for agencies to celebrate children and families and promote permanency. For more information on National Adoption Month 2020, please visit www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/about/.

If you are having an event that you would like to have featured on the SWAN Facebook page, please contact Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov.

Trauma-Informed Workgroup

As a result of the governor's Executive Order, Pennsylvania will become a trauma-informed state. Pennsylvania's workforce will administer trauma-informed services to serve our most vulnerable populations, centered around Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) with a focus on the following priorities:

- Building a network to connect and support community-based, grassroots movements across the commonwealth.
- Prioritizing changes at the state level to affect culture, policy, and practice.
- Healing from the trauma of a major disaster such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Healing from the damage of racism, communal, and historical trauma.

This initiative will take place over a ten-year period and will be a phased approach, including becoming trauma-aware, followed by trauma-sensitive, then trauma-informed with the goal of being healing-centered.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families has formed a Trauma Team workgroup under the direction of the governor's Office of Advocacy and Reform. The Trauma Team workgroup is responsible for developing a workplan to prepare OCYF's workforce to provide support to service

providers in their journey to become trauma-aware by the end of 2021. This includes education on being trauma-aware, measurement of trauma-aware qualifications and the ability to provide technical assistance for providers to maintain this credential.

The Trauma Team is currently reviewing all resources relating to trauma-informed care that are available for providers, considering future use of a provider survey to gauge the providers' level of being trauma aware and using a DHS-wide measuring tool to assist licensing staff in confirming the qualifications of providers. There is collaboration across departments to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure consistent practices throughout DHS.

Future updates regarding this initiative will be provided as they are available.

Child Welfare Case Management System

Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM) is a subsystem of Enterprise Case Management (ECM). Conversations regarding the CW CM subsystem were delayed as a result of the health pandemic. The CW CM Steering Team met on August 11 and 25 to discuss the CW CM project and the timing of restarting CW CM activities with county involvement. As conversations continue, counties will be notified of the next steps.

Extension of Aftercare Services and Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Under the provisions of the *Family First Prevention Services Act*, Pennsylvania extended Chafee aftercare services to age 23 and Chafee ETG to age 26 beginning July 1, 2020.

The extension of aftercare services from age 21 to 23 will allow former foster youth to receive IL services, which includes needs assessment/case planning, life skills training, prevention services, education, support services, employment, location of housing, room and board, retreats and camps, indirect services and program administration. Youth who achieved permanency through adoption or permanent legal guardianship prior to age 16 are not eligible for Chafee aftercare services, ETG or the Fostering Independence through Education program, known as FosterED.

In addition, *Family First* amended the Chafee ETG program and allowed states to extend eligibility to youth up until their 26th birthday (previously 23rd birthday) and allow youth to participate in the program for up to five years, which need not be consecutive.

Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2020–2021 academic year can be found online at: www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

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

Please contact the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency 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.

Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

The Fostering Independence through Education program, known as FosterED, began with the fall semester of 2020. The FosterED program requires Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions to award a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for Pennsylvania resident youth who meet Chafee ETG eligibility requirements and who 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 postsecondary schools and other eligible schools. Youth are eligible to receive the waivers for five years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26.

In addition to the waivers, each postsecondary 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. As postsecondary institutions begin to process admission applications and financial aid packages, 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 determining the eligibility of a youth entering postsecondary education.

Each postsecondary education institution is required to have their identified POC listed on their website. Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at PHEAA.org/FosterEd located at <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml>.

Questions related to the FosterED program can be directed to Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov.

National Youth in Transition Database

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information in the following areas: 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 just wrapped up Cohort 4 for the Baseline Population. As of October 1, 2020, Pennsylvania entered Cohort 3 for Follow-up Surveys for 21-year-old youth. Counties can log onto www.getnytdpa.org to enter their survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at temusser@pa.gov or at 717-214-7385.

If you have any problems with password reset or you don't remember what your username is (or have any other technical assistance questions related to NYTD), please contact the NYTD Help Desk at (800) 436-4105 or getnytd@pcgus.com.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Beginning July 1, 2021, Title IV-E funding for congregate care settings will be limited to the first 14 days unless the child welfare residential provider is certified as a specialized setting and the child/youth is eligible for Title IV-E. The specialized settings that OCYF created enhanced programmatic requirements for are:

- Pregnant, Expecting and Parenting Youth in Care
- Victims of or Those at Risk for Sex Trafficking
- Youth Transitioning to Adulthood (ages 18-21)

This summer, Pennsylvania certified 14 programs to prevent or treat victims of sex trafficking and six programs to serve youth transitioning to adulthood. The six facilities for youth transitioning to adulthood are licensed under Bethany Home, Inc. (3), Carson Valley Children's Aid (1) and Delta Family Services, LLC. (2), which are all located in the Southeast region. The 14 facilities for victims of or those at risk for sex trafficking are licensed under Bethany Home, Inc. (13) in the Southeast region and Cornell Abraxas Group Inc. (1) in the Central region. The OCYF bulletin 3680-02-20, 3800-02-20, titled *Certification as a Specialized Setting for Children and Youth*, describes the enhanced requirements the providers had to meet to become certified.

Currently, a second round of Specialized Settings certification is underway. Providers that submitted a letter of intent indicating they will submit an application to OCYF have until November 30 to do so. Once applications are received, OCYF regional staff will work with the providers to certify them.

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Family First (Cont'd.)

Please note that the IV-E limitations for congregate care placements other than in specialized settings apply to any placement occurring on or after July 1, 2021. Pre-existing placements will remain IV-E reimbursable for IV-E eligible youth.

Pennsylvania KinConnector Program

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

Accurant

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

Additionally, you can look up trainings on the national training calendar [here](#).

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

Credit Reports

Did you know that every credit bureau has a specific contact person and process to ensure foster care youth credit history checks are completed appropriately? If you are unsure of this information, have questions regarding the credit report history of foster care youth, or are having issues obtaining a credit history from one of the credit bureaus, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at wildickins@pa.gov or 717-787-2726 for assistance.

Mandated Reporter Training

In-person mandated reporter trainings cannot be conducted at this time due to COVID-19, however, the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) are offering virtual training opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic so that professionals and volunteers can participate in a safe environment. In-person trainings will be made available again when it is appropriate. To schedule a virtual training with PFSA, contact their office at info@pa-fsa.org or at 1-800-448-4906. If you are in the medical profession and wish to schedule training with AAP for the Educating Physicians in their Communities-Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (EPIC-SCAN), contact AAP at scan@paaap.org or at 1-866-823-7226.

PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium: 2020 Virtual Event

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) will be hosting the PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium, November 5, 2020 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. It will feature nationally acclaimed speakers who are experts in child protection, education, the impact of substance use disorder on children, and equity, diversity and inclusion for youth. Presentations will include a variety of topics that are relevant to professionals and organizations that provide programs to children. Symposium participants will be from throughout the Commonwealth (and beyond). To register go to <https://www.pa-fsa.org/Calendar> or call 1-800-448-4906.

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.

Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

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From the SWAN Prime Contract

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

SWAN/OCMI receives Adoption Excellence Award

We are proud to announce that the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has selected the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network's (SWAN), Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI) to be a recipient of a 2020 Adoption Excellence Award (AEA). HHS established the AEA program in 1997 to recognize outstanding accomplishments in achieving permanency for America's children waiting in foster care.

SWAN began OCMI in 2008 in an effort to find families for some of Pennsylvania's hardest to place youth. SWAN OCMI is a collaborative diligent recruitment effort designed to find adoptive families for children over the age of ten (many of whom are teenagers, have special needs or are a part of a sibling group). OCMI is managed through the SWAN prime contract who, in turn, has contracted with Diakon Adoption and Foster Care with partners from Bethanna, Project STAR at The Children's Institute and Family Pathways. Since its inception, OCMI has helped more than 200 children achieve permanency. Data from May 2020 shows that, of all children ever receiving OCMI services, 353 (55%) children have been matched, and 297 (46%) children have been placed. (These numbers include children who are still in care and working towards permanency.)

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families is committed to finding permanency for older children and has allowed maximum services to be referred for them. It is not unusual for the youth participating in this initiative to get the full array of SWAN services while also receiving the intense services offered by OCMI.

HHS will hold a virtual ceremony on November 17 for all AEA award recipients. In addition to the presentation of the awards, this celebration will highlight a national adoption recruitment campaign and launch the newest public service announcement that encourages the adoption of older youth from foster care.

Congratulations to OCMI leadership and recruiters, and congratulations to the network for everyone's efforts in achieving permanency for older youth. Keep up the great work that recognizes all children, regardless of age or disability, can achieve permanency.

Affiliate Contract Amendment

The SWAN prime contract term has been extended. The updated term is October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. Affiliate contract extension amendments were emailed to the affiliate contract contacts through DocuSign on Friday, September 25, 2020. DocuSign enables contractors to sign and return amendments electronically versus having to print, sign, and return mail amendments.

On Oct 1-2, 2020, a separate email was sent to Affiliate primary contacts about the annual contract documentation required now that the contract is extended. To avoid a disruption in service referrals please return contract documentation to the SWAN prime contractor by Oct 21, 2020.

SWAN LSI MOU Process for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020-21

SWAN LSI looks forward to working with counties with the goal of expediting permanency throughout SFY 2020-21. As a result of the SWAN prime contract extension through June 30, 2021, LSI operations for SFY 2020-21 will continue under the auspices of the SFY 2019-20 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It is anticipated that the annual MOU process will resume for SFY 2021-22. Counties may contact their assigned SWAN LSI coordinator or division manager with any questions.

SWAN Legal Training Division Staff Update

We would like to welcome **Lauren Peters, Esquire** as the new SWAN legal training division manager. Lauren has been with SWAN for 9 years, and has previously served as a SWAN LSI paralegal, a SWAN LSI coordinator and a legal training specialist.

Among other things, Lauren will be overseeing responses to Warmline questions and the compiling the monthly Legal Report.

Monthly Legal Reports

Every month the SWAN legal services training specialists prepare a report on current legal developments impacting child welfare practice. The report includes summaries of the key facts, holdings and rationale of Pennsylvania state and federal court decisions as well as any new statutes, court rules or regulations that are released.

The report consolidates the legal information in one, easy-to-read document to help your agency comply with new and existing laws and also helps to complete legal research. Each legal report can be found on the SWAN website, www.diakon-swan.org, under the Publications tab. If you have any questions about the report feel free to contact the LSI Warmline at lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org.

SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet: A Comprehensive Search Tool

The *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet* contains vital information and forms to help paralegals and agency staff search for permanent resources for children in the Pennsylvania child welfare system, as well as comply with federal and state mandates in their diligent search efforts. The diligent search packet can be downloaded from the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

The SWAN LSI Warmline (Isiwarmline@diakon-swan.org) is available to answer questions about the packet and searching. Counties seeking training or assistance with diligent search should contact their assigned SWAN LSI coordinator. Affiliate agencies seeking training or assistance with diligent search should contact their assigned SWAN regional technical assistant.

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 county prisons' policies, procedures and services available. The *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual* (IRM) compiles each Pennsylvania county's prison policies and procedures into a single, comprehensive document.

This tool can assist caseworkers and supervisors as they case plan with incarcerated parents, as well as be a resource to support the counties' efforts to engage with these parties. Links to additional resources, such as state and federal facilities, are included in the current edition.

We are in the process of updating the IRM to include additional COVID-19 policies. The most current version of the manual can be downloaded from the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#). Updates about county prison policies and procedures or questions may be forwarded to Isi-irmupdates@diakon-swan.org.

SWAN Helpline Staff Update

In January 2020, **Jan Scherer** was named the SWAN Helpline lead coordinator. She filled this position on an interim basis starting in September 2019. Jan has more than 30 years of human services experience, and for 21 of those years she has been with the SWAN Helpline. She has a background in neuro-psychology, mental health, intellectual disabilities and social work.

In July 2020, the SWAN Helpline hired a new SWAN technical specialist, **Victoria Craig**. She comes to the SWAN Helpline with previous experience in the mental health field, education and foster care. She rounds out a team that

already includes **Missy Wellington**, whose background is in speech pathology, business management and telecommunications; **Lynette Lemke**, whose background is in art therapy and mobile therapy; and **Jennifer Bormman**, whose background is in social work, including both personal and professional experience in working with permanency issues.

LSI Warmline Update

In SFY 2019-20, the legal training specialists researched and responded to nearly 300 legal child welfare related questions. The Warmline accepts inquiries from all people involved in the child welfare system, including: paralegals, child welfare attorneys, child welfare workers, resource parents, biological parents and Diakon-FDR staff. Popular topics include: adoption, adoption assistance, dependency, subsidized permanent legal custodianship, termination of parental rights, the Indian Child Welfare Act, immigration, notice and standing. Questions are answered as soon as possible based on volume, availability and complexity so do let us know if you have a deadline. Inquiries can be submitted by phone (888-793-2512) or email (Isiwarmline@diakon-swan.org).

Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet

The SWAN Affiliate Budgeting Worksheet (ABW) was released in July 2020. This resource is designed to help affiliate administration and fiscal personnel plan and monitor the fiscal aspect of their SWAN program. This worksheet can be used to manage caseloads, identify staffing needs and referral trends, analyze cost and time data and forecast budgeting needs. Four Q&A sessions were offered to affiliates upon rollout. Additionally, video tutorials and the ABW User Guide are available on the SWAN Portal Help tab under "Training Resources" and in the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#) under SWAN Units of Service.

Affiliate agencies may contact their RTA for individualized support.

Special thanks to the following affiliate workers who piloted the worksheet:

- Laura Doran, Adelphoi Village
- AJ Zehner, Kidspeace
- Joyce Richie, Diakon-Topton
- Melissa Lichtfus, Pinebrook Family Answers

SWAN Helpline Adapts to Teleworking

As a result of COVID-19, the SWAN Helpline transitioned operations to telework. At the beginning, there were questions about what that would be like and if it was possible to provide the same services to families in full. After six months, the SWAN Helpline can report that all services have been delivered to families without interruption.

Adoptive families' needs have also changed as COVID-19 has impacted their school, work, and home lives. We have seen an increase in SWAN Post-permanency services (specifically, respite). The SWAN Post-permanency team was able to make some changes rather quickly to accommodate new types of respite to help families during these times.

Families who are interested in SWAN Post-permanency services can contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-7926 or by email at SWANhelpline@diakon-swan.org.

Pivoting to Virtual Matching Events Part 2: Planning a Virtual Matching Event

For the majority of this year, COVID-19 and social distancing requirements have caused in-person matching efforts to come to a halt. The network has demonstrated resilience and innovation by offering virtual matching events to promote permanency for children and families. There have been nine virtual matching events offered around the Commonwealth attended by approximately 300 caseworkers, youth and families. These events have featured more than 50 children and families. The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) has gathered some tips for agencies considering hosting a virtual matching event:

- **Gather a team** to help plan and run the event.
- **Determine your audience.** Is it adoptive families, child/family recruiters, or youth?
- **Create a process to pre-register and vet** everyone in the room. Adoptive families should be active with an agency, approved and in good standing.
- **Pick the platform** you will use. Ensure that it has sufficient confidentiality and safety features.
- **Attend other virtual matching events**, consult with your regional SWAN technical assistance team and reach out to agencies who have hosted virtual events for advice.
- **Schedule your event.** Events are usually one or two hours long. Check adoptpakids.org and diakon-swan.org to make sure your event does not overlap with other matching events.

- **Marketing is key!** Contact the SWAN Helpline and use the SWAN/IL Google group to spread the word.
- **Create the event's schedule** and plan the virtual presentation.
- **Identify a facilitator** who will maintain engagement during the event.
- **Have a virtual "tech" rehearsal** where you coach youth, families, and caseworkers. Work out all technology glitches!
- **Record the event**, if possible, but you must notify/get permission from participants. Determine how the event will be stored, shared, and replayed.
- **Follow up is essential!** Send a post-event survey/evaluation, making sure to capture the number of inquiries and connections made. Think about how to foster connections and manage inquiries from your event.

As always, matching events are an **introductory information sharing** opportunity. Just like in-person events, be mindful to **maintain confidentiality and safety** when sharing information about clients online.

If you have any questions, please reach out to a PAE coordinator.



Zoom in on Practice

SWAN program technical assistants (TAs) have continued serving the network during COVID-19 restrictions by presenting 26 virtual trainings, which took place from June through August. The *Zoom in on Practice* trainings have seen excellent attendance. More than 100 network members logged on to *Discover the SWAN Permanency Toolkit*, which was presented twice. Four child-specific recruitment trainings drew 172 attendees and *Behavioral Interviewing and Strength-Based Writing* appealed to 185 network members.

Post-permanency TAs presented a *Back to Basics* series, including five sessions on assessment tools and two each on case advocacy, respite and support groups. About 475 people took advantage of those trainings. *Navigating a Difficult Journey* had 181 viewers, and 60 network members joined *Dear Post-perm TA* to ask their post-permanency questions. *Building Resilient Children and Youth* was attended by 42 people.

Units of Services (US) meetings have continued on schedule as well, with Post-permanency US meetings drawing 175 viewers and Programming US meetings drawing 524 viewers.

Moving from in-person to virtual trainings and meetings has presented some challenges, but overall has proven to be successful. Virtual events have been well-attended by the network, and we thank you for your feedback and participation in these meetings.

Prime contract staff will continue to create virtual trainings for the network. *Zoom in on Practice* will continue through fall, so watch for announcements in your email.



/adoptpa

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SWAN Prime Contract

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

Young Voters

Young voters notoriously neglect the importance of voting, but their voice is an important one on both sides of the aisle. Key issues in every election increasingly relate to the concerns of students between the ages of 18 and 23, making it essential for members within that age group to educate themselves on political issues and take to the polls. The PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is also committed to educating and assisting older youth in advocacy about the importance of voting. Over the next month, please direct older youth to www.payab.pitt.edu for information on how to register to vote as well as links for them to register. We will also be sharing information related to voting in our upcoming *Blast* and weekly on the YAB Facebook Page.

Youth Ambassador

The Child Welfare Resource Center is happy to welcome Youth Ambassador **Norma Scott**. Norma has been an active member of the YAB both on the statewide and regional levels. As a Youth Ambassador, Norma will help lead youth engagement training and technical assistance efforts across Pennsylvania in collaboration with our older youth project manager and practice improvement specialists working in the counties.

Weekly Resource Email

In an effort to reduce the number of emails sent to agencies, the Child Welfare Resource Center, Older Youth Unit is sending a weekly resource email to staff working with older youth and in independent living programs. These emails include information about upcoming events, trainings, resources directly related to older youth. We will continue to share any time-sensitive information immediately.

SAT Waivers

Many high school juniors and seniors are not only looking to earn their high school diploma or GED certificate, but also considering their options regarding postsecondary education. The process of applying for college admission can be expensive. Costs may include SAT fees and institutional application fees. To reduce this financial barrier, the College Board provides SAT fee waivers to various agencies to distribute to qualified, economically disadvantaged students who plan to take the SATs. The Child Welfare Resource Center is one of the agencies designated to distribute SAT fee waivers. Below you will find some additional information about the waivers, as well as the process on how to obtain a waiver for your youth.

- The Child Welfare Resource Center will be distributing SAT and SAT Subject Test waivers to aid Pennsylvania's older youth as they continue their higher education.
- Forms can be found at <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/StaffResources.htm>. They should be completed by the county children and youth agency or the private provider agency contracted by the county.
- Completed forms should be emailed as an attachment to Frank Revesz, frevesz@pitt.edu. Please keep in mind the deadline for each testing date and allow a sufficient amount of time to process the paperwork.
- Upon receipt of the request, SAT waivers and any materials will be sent to the requestor.
- Students now receive four college application fee waivers on their College Board account after they take the SAT using a fee waiver.
Because of this, physical college application fee waivers will no longer be sent.

Eligibility:

- Fee waivers for both the SAT and the SAT Subject Test are available for **current high school students** who cannot afford to pay the test fees.
- 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.
- Eligible students can receive a total of four SAT fee waivers during their academic career – two for the SAT and two for the SAT Subject Tests.
- Fee waivers for the SAT are available for *juniors and seniors only*.

- Fee waivers for the SAT Subject Test are available for *freshmen, sophomore, junior, or senior years*. A fee waiver can cover as many as three SAT Subject Tests on one test day. Students who are not yet in ninth grade may not use the subject test fee waivers.
- Students can use the fee-waiver card to register for the test online or by mail:
- To register online, the student uses or creates a free account at www.collegeboard.com. During the registration process, the student will be prompted to enter the unique 12-digit fee-waiver code from the front of the card.
- To register by mail, the student must fill out a paper registration form and enclose the completed card in the registration envelope provided. The card must be completely filled out. An incomplete fee-waiver card will delay the student's test registration.

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

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