

# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

## Division X of the Consolidated Appropriations Act

On December 27, 2020, the president signed into law the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law \(P.L.\) 116-260](#). The law provides additional appropriations for specified federal agencies and provides flexibilities and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency; the COVID-19 public health emergency is defined as beginning on January 27, 2020, when the emergency was declared by the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and continues to be in effect. The law also contains House Resolution 7947, the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act, known as Division X. Division X's purpose is to provide youth assistance during the pandemic and recovery by providing child welfare agencies the funding and flexibility to meet these urgent needs, specifically:

- Section 3 of Division X provides an increase in funding and in program flexibilities related to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) and the Education and Training Grant (ETG).
- Until September 30, 2021, Section 4 of Division X prohibits child welfare agencies from terminating foster care services to youth who would age out and requires child welfare agencies to provide re-entry to youth who aged out during the COVID-19 public health emergency even if they have reached age 21.

[OCYF Special Transmittal - Consolidated Appropriations Act, Division X 041321](#) was released on April 13, 2021 and provides CCYAs with guidance and expectations related to Sections 3 and 4 of Division X. According to Division X and OCYF guidance, CCYAs should:

- Allow youth who age out as of December 27, 2020 who are adjudicated dependent, dually adjudicated or shared case responsibility to voluntarily remain in foster care until September 30, 2021 even if they reach age 21.

- As of December 27, 2020, permit formerly adjudicated dependent, dually adjudicated or shared case responsibility youth, who left foster care due to age during the COVID-19 public health emergency, to voluntarily re-enter care until September 30, 2021.
- Extend the age of eligibility for Chafee aftercare services to eligible former foster youth through age 26 (until their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday) or until September 30, 2021.

The federal requirements of Division X supersede the definition of a "child" according to Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act. Additional direction and information will be issued by the DHS/OCYF directly to CCYAs regarding funding adjustments and fiscal expectations so that CCYAs can follow procedures to fund extended placement and services for youth who reach age 21 who extend and re-enter foster care.

CCYAs and providers are encouraged to read Division X, Sections 3 and 4 as summarized by the [Children's Bureau's, Administration for Children and Families, Information Memorandum \(IM\), ACYF-CB-IM-21-05](#), on January 13, 2021 and outlined in the Program Instruction (PI) [ACYF-CB-PI-21-05](#) issued on March 9, 2021. Additional information can be found at [Supporting Youth in Foster Care Through the Pandemic - Child Welfare Information Gateway](#).

Contact Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 717-214-7385 for questions related to Division X.

## Media

SWAN's #MeetTheKids media campaign will air on network and cable television in all six media markets in Pennsylvania during the months of May, June, November and December 2021. Radio advertisements will also air during these months. In addition to tv and radio, the media campaign includes online media ads on Google, Hulu, Facebook, Instagram and Cumulus that will run from April 26 – December 31, 2021.

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

### 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. Contracts will be in place from April 26 – December 31, 2021.

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](mailto:jjones@3riversadopt.org) or Nikita Lewis at [nlewis@diakon-swan.org](mailto:nlewis@diakon-swan.org).

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM's *Val's Kids*, please contact Alfredo Gonzalez at [algonzalez@diakon-swan.org](mailto:algonzalez@diakon-swan.org).

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE's *A Little Love*, please contact Crissy Crawford at [ccrawford@diakon-swan.org](mailto:ccrawford@diakon-swan.org).

### Trauma-Informed Workgroup

On July 30, 2019, Governor Wolf declared that Pennsylvania would become a trauma-informed state. The process will be introduced over the next ten years and will occur in a phased approach. The four phases include trauma-aware, trauma-sensitive, trauma-informed and healing-centered.

Pennsylvania's process for becoming a trauma-informed state was created over a four-month period and included work by a vast group of individuals with various areas of knowledge and expertise relating to a trauma-informed approach. The result of their work is a plan to guide the Commonwealth and licensed residential stakeholders to an understanding of what it means to be a "trauma-informed and healing centered state."

Scientific studies have confirmed untreated trauma has negative and costly effects on a person's physical and mental health. It impacts their ability to learn and experience healthy relationships as well as their ability to reach their full potential. A Statewide Trauma-Informed Leadership Team has been created to establish short and long-term goals to achieve the identified objective of becoming a state that not only rises to the current scientific standards but exceeds those standards and sets the bar for the rest of the nation. This team is tasked with assigning accountability and advancing recommendations to achieve the desired outcome.

The plan focuses on six key areas:

1. Ensuring that the culture in the state of Pennsylvania is trauma-informed through universal training.
2. Ensuring all state agencies' policies and practices are trauma-informed and more focused on prevention and healing.
3. Mandating that all licensed and funded entities become trauma-informed.
4. Building and supporting grassroots/community-based efforts to become trauma-informed in every part of the Commonwealth.
5. Recognizing and healing from the traumas of major crisis like COVID-19.
6. Preventing and healing racial, communal, and historical traumas, whether they be individual or systemic.

The first phase of this process includes ensuring all OCYF staff and licensed residential stakeholders become "trauma-aware" by the conclusion of 2021. All licensed county and foster/adoption stakeholders will become "trauma-aware" by the conclusion of 2022. OCYF staff and all licensed residential stakeholders will begin working together over the next year to identify providers who are currently providing "trauma-aware" training and information to their staff, as well as what training, tools and resources are available to assist all OCYF staff and licensed stakeholders to become "trauma-aware." OCYF requested all licensed residential stakeholders take a brief survey to determine each agency and facility's current understanding of trauma-informed care.

The most cost-effective/free means of ensuring that all agencies and facilities become trauma-aware are currently being explored.

OCYF staff has contacted licensed residential providers to obtain detailed information regarding any trauma related training that is currently being provided to agency staff. OCYF will also be reviewing the current trauma training practices to determine if an agency's training and protocols meet the accepted trauma aware definition. For those licensed residential stakeholders who do not currently meet this criterion.

If you should have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to our designated resource account: [RA-PWOCYFTrauma@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PWOCYFTrauma@pa.gov).

Thank you in advance for your commitment as we begin this process together. More information will be forthcoming.

## **Family First Prevention Services Act**

### *Specialized Settings Least Restrictive Placement Statement:*

Specialized Settings were identified through the Family First Prevention Services Act as enhanced congregate care settings to meet the need of the identified populations of children at risk or victims of sex trafficking, pregnant and parenting youth, and youth transitioning to adulthood. While Pennsylvania has developed standards and certification processes for becoming a specialized setting, that does not guarantee youth who may fit the designated population will automatically be placed in those settings. The placement decision for a child who has been determined to need out-of-home care continues to be made at the county level (county agency and Juvenile Court). Family First does not impact the current practice that the placement setting identified for a child should be in the least restrictive setting that can meet the child's safety needs and their identified treatment needs.

For an updated list of the providers who are pursuing a Specialized Setting Certification, please subscribe [here](#) and receive PA Family First updates.

## **Strengthening Equity Workgroup**

Nationally, the overrepresentation of black children in the child welfare system has been well documented across numerous research studies. Understanding the impact of racial disparity in the child welfare system requires recognition of the points at which bias can enter the system and how inequities at each point can impact the trajectory of children and families as they move through the system. Racial disparity can often be found at the very point where families often first come into contact with the child welfare system.

As part of the Department of Human Services' racial equity initiative, OCYF convened the Strengthening Equity Workgroup (SEW). SEW is represented by a diverse group of staff from across all bureaus within the program office. The purpose of the workgroup is to:

- Identify areas of child welfare service where changes in policy and/or practice can reduce racial disparities. This will be achieved by an intentional review of child welfare data and practices.
- Create meaningful change within the culture of OCYF by incorporating a racial equity lens in all OCYF initiatives and processes.
- Establish next phases for racial equity work.

Some of the key areas of focus proposed by the group include increasing culturally relevant prevention efforts, building partnerships and opportunities within the community and increasing cultural competency for responding to crises. The workgroup will devote significant time to review of existing and new data to further conduct analysis of apparent inequities and further identify root causes.

This work will take place over a two-year period and will be accomplished as a phased approach. Future updates regarding this initiative will be provided as they are available.

## **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](mailto:bwhary@diakon-swan.org) or 717-558-1223.

## **Child Welfare Case Management System**

What is Enterprise Case Management?

Enterprise Case Management (ECM) is a new way to provide enhanced case management for the Department of Human Services (DHS) and its business partners through the implementation of a common platform to help plan and deliver individual/participant services for multiple DHS supervised programs.

ECM allows for:

- Easier sharing of information among DHS Program Offices, counties, individuals/participants, and providers to enable better decision making for improved individual/participant outcomes.
- Increased ability to understand performance across programs and make continuous improvements.
- Enhanced data security including expanded access to information based on individual/participant consent.
- Reduced effort and cost to maintain systems because of the use of a common platform.

Please see the next two pages for an outline of the ECM process.

## ECM At a Glance



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### Positive Impacts to Individuals/Participants

DHS expects those we serve will experience the following benefits as a direct result of ECM:

- Improved coordination of care and service planning, because ECM will allow for greater visibility into an individual's/participant's services when they are shared across programs within ECM
- Increased ability for individuals/participants to take a more active role in the care they receive, because ECM will allow individuals/participants to see their information in near-real time, ask questions, provide information, or view information about their services and supports
- Enhanced ability for individuals/participants to quickly respond to tasks or issues that arise because ECM will allow for streamlined communications
- Added ability for individuals/participants to manage their own appeals, because ECM will allow for the electronic submission, management, and monitoring of appeals
- Strengthened communication among individuals/participants, DHS, and its partners because ECM will allow all stakeholders to have access to case information in one tool

### ECM Goals and Objectives

A main objective of ECM is to provide a complete picture of the services and supports individuals/participants and/or families receive through programs sponsored by multiple program offices within DHS and counties across the cases in which they are involved.

#### What does the ECM implementation mean for DHS and county human services organizations?

An integrated enterprise case management system can:

- Provide a more holistic view of the individuals/participants being served
- Promote effective communication among stakeholders at all levels
- Reinforce the connection DHS and the counties have with the individuals and families being supported as well as their providers

#### Overall benefits include:

- Improved access to complete case information
- Reduced data entry time through automation capabilities
- Reduced duplication of individual/participant records and documentation
- Mobile capabilities allow easy access to information and data captured in the field
- Improved ability to more quickly address changes in policy, laws, and regulations
- Online functionality for individuals/participants, families, and providers access status and other information related to their case or care plan

## ECM At a Glance



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### ECM Scope

The ECM Platform is the structural foundation for four major DHS subsystems:

- **Home and Community-Based Services Subsystem (HCBSS):** The HCBSS will replace what is currently known as the Home & Community Services Information System (HCSIS). It will serve as the enrollment and case management system for the DHS program offices, counties, and providers supporting the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs, including Medicaid waivers.
- **Hearings & Appeals:** The Hearings & Appeals subsystem will replace the collection of legacy systems DHS uses to manage appeals under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals (BHA).
- **Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) Enrollment Services:** The OLTL Enrollment Services subsystem will be used by an Enrollment Services Entity and DHS to manage the process to assist individuals in exploring and applying for Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS).
- **Child Welfare Case Management (CW CM):** The CW CM subsystem will create a single, statewide Child Welfare Case Management System for all Pennsylvania Counties.

The ECM Platform will interface and share data with several other systems including:

- Centralized Person Management (currently MCI)
- Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS Modernization, currently PROMISe™)
- Master Provider Index (MPI)
- Electronic Client Information System (eCIS)
- Resource Information and Services Enterprise (RISE PA)
- Enterprise Licensing System

### Implementation Approach

The ECM implementation timeline spans multiple years and is comprised of three phases. The following describes, at a high level, the anticipated phases and timing of each:

- Phase 0 (est. 2021-2022): ECM Platform (upon which subsystems will be implemented)
- Phase 1 (est. 2022-2023): HCBSS, Hearings and Appeals, OLTL Enrollment Services
- Phase 2 (est. 2023-2024): CW CM



### **Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2021 – 2022 academic year can be found online [here](#).

All current ETG award recipients will be automatically 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.

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](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 717-214-7385.

### **Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program**

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterED, began with the fall semester of 2020. FosterED requires that Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions 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 the waivers for 5 years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26.

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 being awarded.

Each postsecondary 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](#).

Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at [PHEAA.org/FosterEd](https://PHEAA.org/FosterEd).

Questions related to the FosterED program can be directed to Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov).

### **ABA's Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Initiatives**

The American Bar Association's (ABA) Center on Children and the Law Permanency and Education Barriers Project is actively seeking new project or technical assistance counties. Please reach out if you would like to discuss the ways in which we may be of assistance.

- For more information on Permanency Barriers please see [here](#).
- For more information on Education Barriers please see [here](#).

County agencies interested in the Education Barriers to Permanency Project should contact Kathleen McNaught at [Kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org](mailto:Kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org).

### **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 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). Pennsylvania is currently in Cohort 3 for Follow-up Surveys for 21-year-old youth as of April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021 (2021B.) Counties have until October 15, 2021 to submit their follow-up surveys as well as served population data. Counties can log onto [www.getnytdpa.org](http://www.getnytdpa.org) to enter their served and survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 717-214-7385.

### **Important Note for Reporting Served Population Data**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act extended aftercare services to young adults through age 26 or until their 27<sup>th</sup> birthday through September 30, 2021. CCYAs need to include all IL services provided to this extended age population when entering their NYTD Served Population data into the system.

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](mailto:getnytd@pcgus.com).

### **Pennsylvania KinConnector Program**

The PA KinConnector program offers kinship families and professionals who work with kinship families support, guidance, and resources. Kinship families you work with can be referred to the Kinconnector website at, [www.kinconnector.org](http://www.kinconnector.org) or their helpline at 866-546-2111 for additional support and assistance.

The website 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 families, resources that agencies can print out and make available to kinship families, a kinship blog section, a podcast series called "Kindred Voices," and a newly established virtual Support Group called "Kindred Spirits."

OCYF encourages all county and provider agencies to outreach to the KinConnector program to learn more about the services they offer, to provide new resource information to be included on the website, and to form partnerships that could help inform how this program can grow. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Desiree Weisser at OCYF at [dweisser@pa.gov](mailto:dweisser@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. Please be aware that only county employees may be Accurint administrators for your county's account. If you or your staff would like training in the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Bill News at [william.news@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:william.news@lexisnexisrisk.com) or 215-285-7108.

Additionally, you can look up trainings at National Training Calendar Courses. Click [here](#) for our training calendar.

If you have any questions about Accurint, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at [wildickins@pa.gov](mailto: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 Bureau's, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at [wildickins@pa.gov](mailto:wildickins@pa.gov) or 717-787-2726 for assistance.

### **Mandated Reporter Training**

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) is continuing to offer virtual Mandated Reporter Training at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania. This includes a new training entitled "Reporting Requirements for Children Served in Residential Care Facilities"

This three-hour virtual training is approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and meets all requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse (to include Act 126 for school employees). It is also approved for continuing education credits under Act 31 (Department of State for health-related licenses) and Act 48 (Department of Education for teachers) at no cost. PFSA will submit your training verification to the Department of State or Education as appropriate on your behalf (details provided during training). Additional information and training dates can be found at [pafsa.org](http://pafsa.org).

For questions or to schedule a session specifically for your organization, please email PFSA at [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org)

If you are in the medical profession and wish to schedule training with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for the Educating Physicians in their Communities-Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (EPIC-SCAN), contact the AAP at [scan@paaap.org](mailto:scan@paaap.org) or at 866-823-7226.

### **Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)**

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**From the SWAN Prime Contract**  
*Diakon-SWAN, LLC/Voce*

**One-Year Extension of the SWAN Prime Contract**

In May, affiliate agencies and subcontractors were informed that the SWAN prime contract has been extended. The extension is for a one year term, July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Operation of the contract will continue under the existing prime contract work plan. Contract amendments are not required as the extension is addressed within the current affiliate contract amendments.

**State Fiscal Year 2020-21 Referrals**

As we near the end of state fiscal year (SFY) 2020-2021, some Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) needs-based plan and budget (NBPB) dollars 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 SFY 2020-21 NBPB, counties must submit referrals to the SWAN prime contractor by 11:59 p.m. on **Wednesday, June 30, 2021**. Any referrals received after this cut-off time will be held and then processed in SFY 2021-22. Processing of SFY 2021-22 referrals is expected to begin on **Friday, July 9, 2021**.

If your county has exhausted its SWAN SFY 2020-21 NBPB dollars, do not stop referring. The Department of Human Services has authorized reallocation funds among counties so use of these dollars can be maximized. The SWAN prime contractor will continue to process referrals received for SFY 2020-21 until the NBPB dollars are exhausted.

**SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal**

SWAN LSI coordinators will be working with county agencies on MOU renewals for state fiscal year 2021-2022. The MOU is an agreement between county agencies and the SWAN prime contractor for implementation of the SWAN Legal Services Initiative. The prime contractor requests that counties return signed copies of the MOU by July 30, 2021. MOUs should be mailed to:

471 JPLwick Drive  
P.O. Box 4560,  
Harrisburg, PA, 17111  
ATTN: Maureen Neary

Counties may contact their assigned SWAN LSI coordinator with any questions.

**SWAN LSI Outcomes: Serving Pennsylvania Children**

While state fiscal year 2020-2021 has been a challenging year, SWAN LSI's partnership with counties to expedite permanency has continued to produce successful outcomes. LSI's role includes performing diligent searches, providing support to cases as they move through the juvenile court system and assisting with matters related to orphans court.

From July 1, 2020 through May 15, 2021, SWAN LSI provided services to 28,905 children in Pennsylvania. Below is a summary of these services.

Diligent Search	16,707
Prepare Petition Documents	42,192
Attend Hearing to Provide Support	24,929
Prepare Motion Documents	8,691
Prepare Subpoenas and Hearing Notices	16,858
Prepare Documents for Adoption	1,065

SWAN LSI is involved across Pennsylvania with children and youth at all ages and phases of their journey in the child welfare system. The following is a breakdown of the ages of children and youth with SWAN LSI involvement from July 1, 2020 to May 15, 2021 based on the child/youth's age at the time of their most recent activity.

Age Range	# of Children / Youth	Percentage of Total
0-5	10,842	37.5%
6-10	6,874	23.8%
11-14	5,437	18.8%
15-18	5,253	18.2%
19+	495	1.7%

The SWAN prime contractor greatly appreciates the opportunity to work in partnership with county agencies to expedite permanency for Pennsylvania's children, and we look forward to continuing these efforts in the next fiscal year.

**SWAN LSI Warmline**

Have you ever wondered what the SWAN legal training specialists are doing when they aren't researching, developing and delivering trainings to you? One major role they play is analyzing and answering SWAN LSI Warmline questions.

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In this state fiscal year alone, the legal training specialists researched and responded to over 221 legal child welfare-related questions. The Warmline accepts inquiries from all people involved in the child welfare system, including child welfare attorneys, child welfare workers, resource parents, biological parents and SWAN prime contractor staff. Popular Warmline topics include:

- Adoption
- Adoption assistance
- Dependency
- Subsidized permanent legal custodianship
- Termination of parental rights
- The Indian Child Welfare Act
- Immigration
- Notice
- Standing

Warmline inquiries can be submitted by phone at 888-793-2512 or email at [lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org). When submitting an inquiry, please include your deadline. The legal training team answers questions as soon as possible based on volume, availability and complexity.

### SWAN Monthly Legal Reports

Every month, the SWAN legal 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 released.

The report consolidates the legal information in one, easy-to-read document to help your agency comply with new and existing laws and complete legal research. Reports can be found on [diakon-swan.org](http://diakon-swan.org). If you have any questions about the monthly *Legal Report*, feel free to contact the LSI Warmline at [lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org).

### SWAN Search Guides Undergo Revisions

SWAN LSI is currently working on updating the *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet*, so stay tuned for the 8th Edition! The 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 *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet* can be downloaded from the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

Additionally, the *Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Search Guide* is currently being revised and will be released as a SWAN resource this fall. This resource will help to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The [SWAN LSI Warmline](#) is available to answer questions about diligent searches and ICWA searches. If you have any additional questions about these guides, contact your assigned SWAN LSI coordinator (counties) or SWAN regional technical assistant (affiliates).

### SWAN LSI Diligent Search Services

SWAN LSI paralegals have been diligently searching on behalf of Pennsylvania's children for nearly 20 years! Over that time, the paralegals have become super sleuths in their search process while also expanding search activities.

You may wonder, are SWAN LSI paralegals able to support searches for:

- Missing parents?
- Fostering Connections (within 30-days of a child entering care)?
- Connections for older youth and youth in transition from care?
- Locating connections for involvement with Family Group Decision Making or other case-planning?
- Child-specific Recruitment or Older Child Matching Initiative referrals?
- Families at the time their case is accepted for service and annually thereafter?
- Compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)?

The answer to all of these questions is: **YES!**

Nearly every child in care will benefit from diligent search activities at some point in their case. If you have any questions about diligent search services through SWAN LSI, please contact your county's SWAN LSI coordinator.

### SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual (IRM): A Case-Planning Tool

The IRM is a guide that helps county caseworkers and supervisors engage and case-plan with incarcerated parents to maintain the parent-child connection. The manual provides protocols for each county correctional facility in Pennsylvania. Details about specific facility protocols include:

*Continued on p. 10*

- Guidelines and nuances regarding 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 for the incarcerated parent and re-entry information to support reunification and permanency efforts.

The newest edition of the IRM can be downloaded from the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#). Links to additional resources, such as state and federal facilities, are also included in the IRM. If you have any questions about the IRM or would like to notify the team about updates to a facility's protocols, please contact [lsi-irmupdates@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsi-irmupdates@diakon-swan.org).

### 139 Days Until National Adoption Month!

There are only 139 days until we celebrate National Adoption Month in November! During National Adoption Month, the network celebrates permanency through adoption, enhances awareness about the need for permanent families and hosts matching events to promote opportunities for children and youth to experience the belongingness, security and the love of a forever family.

The SWAN prime contractor has two resources to help plan National Adoption Month events: [Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide](#) and [Adoption Awareness and Matching Events: Planning for Success](#). Both guides are housed in the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

As we look forward to planning this year's festivities, we would like to recognize the collaboration and ingenuity of the courts, counties and affiliate agencies who hosted virtual finalizations and matching events over the last year. Your unwavering commitment to permanency for children in Pennsylvania's foster care system brought a sense of hope and normalcy to our network, and the children and families it serves, at a time it was needed most.

#### SWAN Prime Contract

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/adoptpa



/adoptpakids

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

### Older Youth Retreat

The 2021 Virtual Older Youth Retreat will be held August from 9-13, 2021. We are excited to present this week-long virtual opportunity for you to connect with peers, experience new things, and demonstrate our theme, *The Future is Us*. The agenda can be found [here](#).

If you know a youth who may be interested in participating, please have them contact their [county IL coordinator](#) to register them. We will also be offering two keynote speakers this year which we are very excited about.

### IL Networking Sessions

IL networking sessions are offered across the state in all regions to support both new and seasoned IL staff in working with older youth. The meetings are driven by staff learning needs and include opportunities to share information, bring in relevant presenters and brainstorm with other staff how to address issues you are experiencing or may need additional support in. If you are interested in connecting with your regional IL networking group, please contact Meghan O'Hare at [meo43@pitt.edu](mailto:meo43@pitt.edu).

### Older Youth Training and Resources

There are several sources of information related to older youth maintained by the Child Welfare Resource Center.

These include:

- The [PA Youth Advisory Board website](#), which includes information for youth and staff.
- The [PA Child Welfare Resource Center website](#).
  - Including [webinars](#) specific to older youth.
- The PA Youth Advisory Board [Facebook page](#).

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