

# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

## National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month, a time to renew our commitment to building brighter futures for children and youth in Pennsylvania who are waiting to be adopted. It's also a moment to celebrate all adoptions and to recognize the families, professionals and advocates who make a lasting difference in their lives. This year's theme, "Honoring Youth: Strengthening Pathways for Lasting Bonds," emphasizes recognizing each young person's unique story and support network to create meaningful adoptions that promote healing, well-being and long-term stability. Whether you're an adoptive parent, a child welfare professional or someone who simply believes in the power of belonging, this month is a chance to reflect, uplift and take action. For more information on National Adoption Month 2026, please visit [National Adoption Month | The Administration for Children and Families](#).

Once again, OCYF will be issuing \$65,000 in mini grants to agencies and coalitions across the state to support recruitment and/or awareness events during the month of November. 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](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or Denise Sheffield [desheffiel@pa.gov](mailto:desheffiel@pa.gov). All requests must be in the form of a picture (jpg or png).

## Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)

The Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process is a federal evaluation, conducted by the Children's Bureau (CB) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), to assess how well states are meeting the needs of children and families involved in the child welfare system. The process aims to ensure that children are safe, achieve permanency and receive well-being support.

The CFSR consists of multiple phases. The first phase includes a written Statewide Assessment that provides qualitative and quantitative evidence on how well Pennsylvania's child welfare system is functioning. Pennsylvania's Statewide Assessment was submitted to ACF on February 2, 2026.

The second phase of the CFSR is Onsite Case Reviews. Pennsylvania began conducting onsite case reviews in April 2026. Reviews have been completed in Montgomery, Jefferson, Northampton, Centre, Philadelphia, Fayette and Lancaster counties.

ACF will issue Pennsylvania's Round 4 CFSR Final Report, which will incorporate findings from both the onsite case reviews, Pennsylvania's Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews that were conducted May 18–22, 2026. After the Final Report is released, the third phase of the CFSR is the development of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP), due within 90 days to ACF.

## *Pennsylvania's Participation in Federal PIP Pilot and Innovation Challenge*

On July 1, 2026, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), formally notified ACF of Pennsylvania's intent to join the CFSR Program Improvement Plan Pilot. This is part of "A Home for Every Child" initiative introduced this year, which emphasizes ensuring every child has access to a safe, stable and loving home while supporting states in strengthening capacity and system performance. ACF issued Technical Bulletin 14, which outlines requirements for the CFSR PIP Pilot centered around the "A Home for Every Child" initiative. OCYF is actively engaged in negotiations with ACF regarding the Technical Bulletin 14 PIP measurement requirements.

## Resource Family Registry Requirement

Act 160 of 2004 amended the Child Protective Services Law (Title 23, Chapter 63), and required all families (foster, adoption and kinship) who

*Continued on p. 2*

apply to be a resource parent for children through Pennsylvania's child welfare system to be registered in the Resource Family Registry (RFR). Public and private children and youth agencies that approve resource parents are required to register them and are responsible for keeping the records updated until the families are no longer working with the agency.

Timely registration ensures accurate statewide records, supports matching and permanency efforts. All agencies have the ability to review a list of their families as well as look at any information submitted on those families. All agencies should review families collectively and individually and update information if needed. Registration and updates can be made by utilizing the Resource Family Registration and Update Form (CY131) in the SWAN Portal.

OCYF Bulletin, 3490-05-01, Implementation of Act 160 of 2004, Amending the Child Protective Services Law, can be found here: [Act 160 Bulletin](#).

If you have any questions about the registration status of families, reports can be obtained online through the SWAN Portal. To verify if your agency is current with all families or to ask questions, please contact Alex Newcomer at [anewcomer@diakon-swam.org](mailto:anewcomer@diakon-swam.org).

### **SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) Advisory Committee**

Valuing strong communication and collaboration as essential to strengthening the partnership, DHS/OCYF and the SWAN prime contractor are working to form a SWAN LSI Advisory Committee in the coming months. Historically, the SWAN LSI program has sought the expertise of County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) in the development, evaluation and implementation of the program through the SWAN LSI Steering Committee and, more recently, through county partner surveys. The establishment of the SWAN LSI Advisory Committee is intended to ensure that:

- CCYA representatives are meaningfully engaged in discussions regarding implementation, evaluation and evolution of the SWAN LSI Program; and
- The SWAN LSI program benefits from the insight of county partners and continues to provide responsive and high-quality permanency services.

We are currently seeking County Administrators and County Solicitors to serve on this committee. Email Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) by November 30, 2026 to express your interest in collaborating on this partnership and the success of SWAN LSI.

### **Child Welfare Mental Health Webpage**

In July 2026, DHS launched the [Child Welfare Mental Health](#) webpage. This webpage includes resources providing guidance to County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs), County Mental Health and Intellectual Disability offices, Primary Contractors and Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations (BHMCO) with the goal of improving access to medically necessary and appropriate mental health and child welfare services for Pennsylvania children and youth under the age of 21 who, now or in the future, are adjudicated dependent and have diagnosed mental health disabilities in order to grow and thrive by being served in family and integrated settings rather than congregate and segregated environments. The webpage includes links to guidance related to mental health screening, teaming, therapeutic foster care, BHMCO community services and best practices and the Complex Needs Planning Process.

### **OCYF Trauma Team**

The OCYF Trauma Team is collaborating with the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to promote trauma-informed approaches. As this work progresses, all OCYF-licensed providers can already access the free trauma-informed care courses available through CWRC. To view the full list of training courses, visit the PACWRC Bridge site at [Login - PACWRC Bridge](#).

The Trauma Team remains committed to advancing trauma-informed care and education. To keep providers informed and supported, the Trauma Team issues a monthly newsletter featuring updated guidance and new topics related to trauma-informed approaches. The newsletter is distributed through the OCYF listserv, the SWAN Google Group, and IL listserv and a copy is added to [OCYF Trauma-Informed Care \(TIC\) | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#) each month.

### **Citizen Review Panels (CRPs)**

The CRP Annual Report was released on August 12, 2026. OCYF extends its gratitude to the panels for their effort in preparing the 2025 Annual Citizen's Review Panel Report and the thoughtfully developed recommendations, which continue to inform ongoing discussions at OCYF.

The CRPs are exploring new focus areas that require collaboration and information gathering from Federal, State and County departments. Each panel is developing recommendations based on research and insights gained at the National Citizen Review Panel Conference in San Diego on June 2nd. A Semi-Annual Fall All-Panel Meeting was held on September 24, 2026, to discuss these recommendations with OCYF leadership prior to drafting the 2026 Pennsylvania CRP Annual Report.

### **Cross-Systems Update**

To promote efficient communication between County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) and Physical Health – Managed Care Organizations (PH-MCOs), section 3.1 of the Health Choices Letter of Agreement (LOA) was updated for the first time in over 20 years. The revised LOA strengthens communication pathways by transitioning to a resource email account for communication between the Health Choices (HC) Liaison and the PH-MCOs and an established communication code for phone calls.

The HC Liaison list has been updated to facilitate contact between PH-MCOs and CCYAs. OCYF requested one shared resource account for each CCYA, accessible only to designated staff responsible for updating a child's physical healthcare provider. Each CCYA/JPO now manages its own county liaison list and authorized users, streamlining and improving communication.

### **Anti-Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Resources**

OCYF has established a resource account ([RA-HSOCYFHumanTraff@pa.gov](mailto:RA-HSOCYFHumanTraff@pa.gov)) to provide anti-human trafficking support and technical assistance. The resource account is available to any counties, providers or individuals working directly with children who may need support, guidance or technical assistance related to human trafficking concerns. OCYF has utilized this resource account to distribute county-specific reports generated by the National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). These reports are shared directly with each county that has children listed as missing.

OCYF strives to maintain a collaborative partnership with counties to ensure these lists and NCMEC's records are as accurate and up to date as possible. Counties are encouraged to contact NCMEC with any updates by calling 1-800-THE-LOST or by submitting a report via the online webform: [Sign In - CMFC Dashboard](#). NCMEC highly encourages anyone who may need to make a report in the future to register and set up their account now, rather than waiting until they need to file a report.

Additional information and resources related to human trafficking prevention, awareness, and child safety can be found through the Department of Human Services' Keep Kids Safe Anti-Human Trafficking webpage: [Human Trafficking | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

### **Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Resources**

OCYF is supporting efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking and promote prevention strategies across Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) recently released a Human Trafficking Social Media Toolkit designed to help organizations share educational information and increase public awareness through coordinated messaging.

The toolkit includes ready-to-use social media content, graphics, awareness messaging and resources focused on recognizing signs of trafficking, prevention efforts and available sources for support. Counties, providers and community partners are encouraged to utilize these materials to help amplify awareness and outreach efforts within their local communities.

Visit the [Human Trafficking Social Media Toolkit | Commission on Crime and Delinquency | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

Additionally, OCYF has established a resource account to provide Human Trafficking support and technical assistance. Questions or requests for assistance may be directed to [RA-HSOCYFHumanTraff@pa.gov](mailto:RA-HSOCYFHumanTraff@pa.gov).

Additional information and resources related to human trafficking prevention, awareness, and child

*Continued on p. 4*

safety can be found through the Department of Human Services' Keep Kids Safe Human Trafficking webpage at [Human Trafficking | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

### **Educational Stability**

*Pennsylvania School Code Update: Update to the Procedure When a Child is Truant*

The [Pennsylvania School Code, § 1333](#), has been updated by [Act 47 of 2025](#) to include new provisions regarding the procedure for when a child is truant. The update includes new language requiring that LEAs:

- (2.1) shall include notice to the person in parental relation that a child who is habitually truant may not transfer, during the school year, to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the child;
- (2.2) shall include resources available to assist the child and the person in parental relation with returning the child to compliant compulsory school attendance and opportunities for further academic recovery in response to the truant behavior.

*Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) new Data Point*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) have issued [guidance](#) on the new "Foster Student" data point within the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS).

### **SWAN Rates Workgroup**

SWAN Rates Workgroup is comprised of more than 50 participants representing SWAN affiliates; the SWAN prime contractor; Diakon-SWAN, LLC; the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services; and OCYF. Erin Howard, Director of Permanency Services, Families United Network (FUN) and Teresa Musser, OCYF, serve as the co-chairpersons for the workgroup. Members participate in quarterly meetings and make recommendations to OCYF on how best to determine the rates to complete SWAN services.

The current focus of the group is to examine the collection of time and cost information pertaining to completion of SWAN Post-permanency services. Additionally, over the past several months, members of the SWAN Rates Workgroup have

streamlined the annual SWAN Cost Analysis Survey (cost survey) used to obtain administrative costs (indirect, overhead and caseworker rates) associated with completing SWAN services. OCYF, the SWAN prime contractor and the SWAN Rates Workgroup are requesting all SWAN affiliates to participate in the 2027-28 cost survey.

Communication was issued to all SWAN affiliates on September 22, 2026. Agencies are strongly encouraged to participate in the cost survey to achieve broad representation in this process. This information is critical in making SWAN service rate recommendations to OCYF. Please direct any questions about the cost survey to Ryan Orban at [ROrban@diakon-swan.org](mailto:ROrban@diakon-swan.org) or to your SWAN technical assistant.

The next SWAN Rates Workgroup is scheduled for November 19, 2026. Meetings are held virtually. If any SWAN affiliate agency is interested in participating on the SWAN Rates Workgroup, please contact Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov).

### **Final Rule, Separate Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes**

On September 28, 2023, the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued a final rule amending regulations to allow Title IV-E agencies to claim Title IV-E federal financial participation for the cost of foster care maintenance payments on behalf of an otherwise eligible child who is placed in a relative or kinship licensed or approved foster family home when the agency uses different licensing standards for relative or kinship foster family homes and non-relative/non-kinship foster family homes. Prior to the publication of this new rule, federal regulations required Title IV-E agencies to use the same licensing standards for both kin and non-kin caregivers, disregarding the unique needs of kinship homes.

This new rule encourages Title IV-E agencies to develop separate kinship-specific licensing standards that place as few burdens on relative and kinship families as possible, limited to federal requirements only, such as the safety requirements in sections 471(a)(10)(A) and (a)(20) of the Social Security Act. In addition, the new rule requires Title IV-E agencies to provide all licensed or approved relative or kinship foster family homes with the same amount of Foster Care Maintenance Payments that would have been

*Continued on p. 5*

made if the child was placed in a licensed or approved unrelated foster family home.

According to the federal rule, states may elect to establish separate kinship-specific licensing standards that are in accord with recommended standards of national organizations for foster family homes related to:

- Admission policies, safety, sanitation and protection of civil rights,
- Use of the reasonable and prudent parenting standard; and,
- Procedures for criminal records checks, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases.

OCYF consulted with DHS Executive Offices, including the Office of General Counsel, Office of Legislative Affairs, and the DHS Executive Policy Office on the process to implement separate kinship-specific licensing standards. Upon consultation, it was determined that a legislative amendment would be required to allow for implementation of separate kinship-specific licensing standards.

OCYF continues to work closely with these offices on the process to introduce a legislative amendment.

### **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

NYTD collects information in the following areas: Baseline Population (surveys every youth who reaches age 17 while in foster care or enters foster care within 45 days of their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday), Follow-up Population (surveys a random sample of Baseline youth at age 19 and 21, depending on Cohort period) and Served Population (any youth or young adult receiving independent living services paid for or provided by the county regardless of age). The 2026B period for baseline surveys ended on September 30, 2026. All survey and served population data must be submitted by October 15, 2026. The 2027A period for 21-year-old Follow-up surveys began immediately on October 1, 2026. If your county has youth identified to participate, the county's NYTD Coordinator should have received an email from PCG with a list of participants, which is also available in the NYTD portal. OCYF encourages youth to be compensated for completing all baseline and follow-up surveys.

Counties can log on to [www.getnytdpa.org](http://www.getnytdpa.org) to enter their served and survey data. NYTD questions can

be directed to Lindsey Glezen at [linglezen@pa.gov](mailto:linglezen@pa.gov) or 717-787-7056.

If you have new staff, need assistance with resetting your password, forgot your username or have 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).

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

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2026-2027 academic year are available on PHEAA's website at [Chafee Education and Training Grant \(Chafee ETG\) Program](#). The deadline to apply is March 31, 2027.

As a reminder, current ETG award recipients will automatically be enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete another ETG application unless they are planning to transfer to a different institution. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

Questions regarding the ETG program can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at [linglezen@pa.gov](mailto:linglezen@pa.gov) or at 717-787-7056. Youth who have questions related to their ETG application can contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.

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

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterEd, requires Pennsylvania post-secondary institutions to 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 public (state) colleges and universities, community colleges, private post-secondary institutions and other eligible schools. Youth are eligible to receive waivers for 10 semesters, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26. All youth who apply for Chafee ETG are automatically evaluated for FosterEd.

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

*Continued on p. 6*

Caseworkers/Coordinators may be contacted by the POC to verify a youth's eligibility. This is a critical step in assisting youth when entering post-secondary education and financial aid packages are being awarded.

Each post-secondary 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 at [Foster Care Contact Directory](#).

Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at [PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver \(FosterEd\) Program](#). Questions regarding FosterEd can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at [liglezen@pa.gov](mailto:liglezen@pa.gov) or at 717-787-7056.

### Credit Reports

The [Social Security Act §475](#) requires that CCYAs perform credit checks for all youth in foster care at age 14 and older by **all three** credit bureaus on a **yearly** basis. Each Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and a process to ensure foster care youths' credit history checks are completed appropriately. If you have questions regarding credit reporting requirements or need assistance obtaining a credit history from one of the Credit Bureaus, please contact Lindsey Glezen at [liglezen@pa.gov](mailto:liglezen@pa.gov) or at 717-787-7056.

### Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Initiatives– American Bar Association (ABA)

The ABA Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Project and Education Barriers Project are actively seeking new projects or technical assistance counties.

These projects work collaboratively with key county stakeholders from the child welfare agency, court, education system, private providers, and community by providing intensive on-site assistance to counties for two to three years, depending on needs.

Technical assistance can range from one training to a few months of engagement. Please reach out if you would like to discuss the ways in which we may be of assistance.

Areas in which the ABA is available to help include:

- Improving collaboration and communication between CYS, court, attorneys and local providers;
- Integrating a kin-first culture;

- Providing hands-on court skills and testifying training for caseworkers'
- Incorporating a race equity lens in child welfare;
- Implementing trauma-informed court practices;
- Meeting the educational needs of youth in foster care;
- Improving school stability and education decision-making;
- Special education advocacy; and
- Engaging parents in educational advocacy.

For more information on Permanency Barriers technical assistance, visit [PA Permanency Project](#) or contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at [heidi.epstein@americanbar.org](mailto:heidi.epstein@americanbar.org).

For more information on the Education Barriers to Permanency Project please see: [Education Barriers to Permanency Project PA Permanency Project](#) or contact Kathleen McNaught at [kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org](mailto:kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org).

### Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)

The Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA) continues to provide advocacy, education, support, and connections to resources for Pennsylvania's foster, adoptive, and kinship families. Through collaboration with families, professionals, agencies and community partners across the Commonwealth, PSRFA works to strengthen the network of support available to resource families.

#### *50th Annual Conference*

PSRFA is excited to celebrate our 50th Annual Conference, being held October 22–23, 2026, at the Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

This year's theme, "One Community, Many Roles, One Mission – Building Bridges for Resource Families," reflects the importance of bringing resource families, child welfare professionals, agencies, and community partners together to advocate for, strengthen and support Pennsylvania's foster, adoptive and kinship families as they care for children and youth involved in the child welfare system.

*Continued on p. 7*

The conference will feature keynote speaker Connie Going, along with workshops addressing topics relevant to resource families and the professionals who work alongside them. Attendees will also have opportunities to connect with statewide organizations, learn about available resources, and network with others supporting children, youth and families across Pennsylvania.

### *Training & Support*

PSRFA continues to host 1 Village 1 Voice, a free monthly virtual training and support group held on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30–8:00 p.m. The training portion is open to both resource families and professionals, followed by a confidential peer support session for foster, adoptive and kinship families.

PSRFA also continues to provide additional virtual training opportunities and collaborates with statewide and community partners to connect families and professionals with information, education and resources.

### *Membership Opportunities*

PSRFA membership is open to resource families, agencies, local foster parent associations, professionals, and other supporters who want to be part of our growing statewide community.

Family Membership: \$25 per year

Agency Membership: \$60 per year

Supporting Membership: \$30 per year

Membership supports PSRFA's advocacy, training opportunities, scholarships for youth connected to resource families, networking opportunities, conference benefits and ongoing support services.

For the Annual Conference, family membership includes complimentary conference registration, and a one-night hotel stay. Agency membership includes complimentary conference registration, and a one-night hotel stay for one agency representative.

### *Volunteer Board Members Needed*

PSRFA is currently seeking volunteer Board members to represent Regions 2, 4 and 7. Board service is open to both resource parents and professionals, and individuals who bring experience from both perspectives.

PSRFA's bylaws require that at least two-thirds of the Board be comprised of resource parents, helping ensure that the voices and lived experiences of resource families remain central to the work of the organization.

- Region 2 – Southeast Pennsylvania: Bucks, Montgomery, Chester and Delaware Counties
- Region 4 – Central/East-Central Pennsylvania: Lycoming, Union, Snyder, Montour, Columbia, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Berks and Lehigh Counties
- Region 7 – Northwest/North-Central Pennsylvania: Erie, Crawford, Warren, McKean, Potter, Cameron, Elk, Jefferson, Clarion, Forest, Venango and Mercer Counties

Individuals interested in leadership, collaboration and strengthening support for Pennsylvania's resource families are encouraged to connect with us.

### *Stay Connected with PSRFA*

For questions about membership, Board opportunities, upcoming training, or to learn more about PSRFA, please visit [www.psrfa.org](http://www.psrfa.org) or contact:

Melissa Geesaman, Executive Director

Email: [mgeesaman@psrfa.org](mailto:mgeesaman@psrfa.org)

Phone: 1-800-951-5151

### **CWEB and CWEL Programs**

*The Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB)* program is present in 19 schools across the state, which provides ample opportunity for senior social work majors to prepare for public child welfare employment. CWEB students complete child welfare coursework, enroll in Foundations training and engage in a child welfare practicum in one of the 67 county child welfare agencies. They are ready to join the workforce immediately following graduation. Students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate for their senior year, fellowship payments during their internship, a bonus upon graduation and more. Upon graduation, a one-year work commitment in a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency is required. Many new CWEB graduates secure employment at the agency where they completed their practicum. However, new graduates may seek employment at any of

*Continued on p. 8*

---

## Administrative Updates — OCYF

---

the 67 county child welfare agencies throughout the state. During the 2025-2026 academic year (fall, spring, and summer terms), 44 students completed their studies. This brings the total number of CWEL graduates to 1,475 since the program began in 2001. In the current 2026-2027 academic year, 47 students have begun their senior year in the CWEL program. For more information, visit [Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates | School of Social Work](#).

*The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL)* program strengthens Pennsylvania public child welfare services by providing graduate-level educational opportunities for current public child welfare professionals at 13 partner graduate schools. Ten programs offer a fully online course of study. The employing agency approves students for either full-time or part-time participation; all students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate, reimbursement for books and other benefits. Full-time students are also granted educational leave from their jobs, and their agency employers receive reimbursement for the student's salary and benefits. Upon graduation, a work commitment at the sponsoring agency is required. During the fall, spring and summer terms of the 2025-2026 academic year, 50 students completed studies. This brings the total number of CWEL grads to 1,831 since the program began in 1995. In the current 2026-2027 academic year, 142 students have begun or resumed their studies through the CWEL program. Agency child welfare staff who are interested in applying for the 2027-2028 academic year are encouraged to plan early by talking with their agency supervisor and administrator and exploring the application process at the participating CWEL school of their choice. CWEL Information sessions are offered virtually every fall and in early spring for county agency staff interested in learning more about the program.

Two virtual Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program information sessions; one on **Friday, November 13, 2026, from 1:00-2:00pm** and the other on **Friday, January 8, 2027, from 9:00-10:00am**, will be held for those county and state public child welfare workers with satisfactory performance evaluations who are interested in learning about the CWEL Program. There is **no need to register**, just join the meeting that best fits your schedule to learn more about this wonderful opportunity to earn your

master's degree in social work through the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program.

### **November 13, 2026, from 1:00-2:00pm**

Join Teams Meeting

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/274962587215068?p=PPmECIui8xR0tab4Vi>

Meeting ID: **274 962 587 215 068**

Passcode: **CWEL**

### **January 8, 2027, from 9:00-10:00am**

Join Teams Meeting

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/277756919535168?p=XoWF0du8HCjNX5kd72>

Meeting ID: **277 756 919 535 168**

Passcode: **CWEL**

CWEL and CWEL Teams are available to provide presentations to county commissioners, advisory boards, agency leadership teams, agency staff members and independent living programs. For more information and to schedule a presentation, please contact Laura Borish, CWEL/CWEL Agency Coordinator at [lbb14@pitt.edu](mailto:lbb14@pitt.edu) or 412-648-2371. Additional information is available at [Child Welfare Education for Leadership | School of Social Work](#).

### **Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program, PA KinConnector**

The PA KinConnector Program offers kinship caregivers and professionals who work with kinship caregivers support, guidance, training and resources. Please provide kinship caregivers with information about PA KinConnector. The PA KinConnector helpline can be reached at 866-546-2111.

The website, [KinConnector.org](https://KinConnector.org), 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 caregivers, printable resources, a podcast series called "Kindred Voices" and a virtual Support Group called "Kindred Spirits." You can also view highlighted stories of kinship families at [PA KinConnector \(serving Kinship families & Grandparents Raising Grandchildren\) | kinship families](#).

*Continued on p. 9*

OCYF encourages all county and provider agencies to connect to PA KinConnector and learn more about the services offered, provide new community resource information for website inclusion and to establish partnerships for program growth across the state. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Diane Michel at [dmichel@pa.gov](mailto:dmichel@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. Each county must have a county employee who is designated as their Accurint administrator. Administrators can be Accurint users or non-users. Non-user administrators do not count toward the county's allotment of users. Counties may have more than one Accurint administrator. If you or your staff would like training on the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant, Jessica Kraft, at [Jessica.Kraft@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:Jessica.Kraft@lexisnexisrisk.com) or 937-286-7660. Additionally, you can look up trainings on the National Training Calendar [LexisNexis® Risk Solutions Learning Center](#). If you have any questions about Accurint or to set up a non-user administrator account, please contact Jessica Andrews-Slagel at [jandrewssl@pa.gov](mailto:jandrewssl@pa.gov) or 717-787-2726.

### **Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum**

OCYF contracts with three entities to provide free-of-charge mandated reporter training. These contracts are as follows:

- The Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), which offers mandated reporter training both in-person and through live virtual sessions.
- The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (PA-AAP), which operates the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program for physicians and medical personnel
- The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC), which operates a self-paced online curriculum.

All trainings offered through these contracts utilize a child abuse recognition and reporting training curriculum approved by DHS in consultation with

the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), as well as approved by the Department of State (DOS) for persons requiring continuing education credit toward licensure or certification.

### **PFSA**

PFSA will continue to offer virtual and in-person, three-hour Mandated Reporter Trainings (MRT) at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania, through November 30, 2026. PFSA also offers trainings with Spanish translators, American Sign Language and Certified Deaf Interpreter translations. PFSA also offers MRT for Amish Foster Parents and Amish Mandated Reporters conducted by an Amish instructor.

Trainings include "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse," which meets all the requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse, as well as "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" and "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" for mandated reporters who have taken Mandated Reporter Training before and need to take it again. The "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" training is designed to help participants respond to disclosures of child abuse in a way that is sensitive and supportive to the child, but without tainting the child's memory. The "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" training helps participants recognize the signs of neglect, determine when and how to make a referral, and increase understanding of General Protective Services and agency procedures.

PFSA also offers a specialized Residential Care Facility Training (RCFT) for individuals who are employed by organizations and agencies licensed under Title 55, Chapter 3800, Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities. The RCFT Program provides information to appropriately identify recordable, reportable and suspected child abuse incidents, as well as information about documentation, minimal facts interviewing and development and implementation of plans of supervision for staff who are under investigation of suspected child abuse. Additional information and training dates can be found at [Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance](#). For questions or to schedule a specific session for your organization, please email PFSA at [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org).

*Continued on p. 10*

### PA-AAP

PA-AAP offers Mandated Reporter Trainings, specifically for Primary Care Physicians (and their staff), Hospitals, Emergency Medical Services and School Nurses, through their Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program. To schedule in-person or virtual training for medical professionals, contact PA-AAP at [scan@paaap.org](mailto:scan@paaap.org) or call 866-823-7226.

### CWRC

CWRC continues to offer a free, virtual, on-demand Mandated Reporter Training. The course is available at [reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://reportabusepa.pitt.edu).

### Waiting Child Segments

The Department of Human Services, Office of Children Youth and Families funds five waiting child segments across the state designed to find adoptive families for older youth in need of families. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for children in foster care and providing the opportunity to enhance child specific recruitment efforts across the Commonwealth.

If you'd like to feature a waiting child, please reach out to the representative listed below.

- *Waiting Child, KDKA-TV, Channel 2, CBS, Pittsburgh*  
Leah Christy at [lchristy@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lchristy@diakon-swan.org)
- *Val's Kids, ABC27 WHTM, Harrisburg*  
Robert Brockman at [rbrockman@diakon-swan.org](mailto:rbrockman@diakon-swan.org)
- *A Little Love, WBRE-TV, Channel 28, NBC, Wilkes-Barre*  
Sarah Reiss at [sreiss@diakon-swan.org](mailto:sreiss@diakon-swan.org)
- *Finding Forever, WJAC, Channel 6, Johnstown*  
Katie Juliana at [kjuliana@diakon-swan.org](mailto:kjuliana@diakon-swan.org)
- *A Family for Life, WSEE, Channel 35, CBS and WICU, Channel 12, NBC, Erie*  
Nic Landon at [nlandon@diakon-swan.org](mailto:nlandon@diakon-swan.org)

### SWAN/IL Google Groups

The SWAN/IL listserv, hosted through Google Groups, serves as an excellent platform for network members to share confidential information, waiting families, waiting children,

matching events and post-permanency resources. It also provides opportunities to seek advice from colleagues and announce upcoming events. Membership is limited to employees of county children and youth agencies, SWAN affiliate agencies or IL providers. If interested, please contact Savanna LaFollette at [SLaFollette@diakon-swan.org](mailto:SLaFollette@diakon-swan.org) or 717-558-1223.

### Interstate Compact Unit

The PA Interstate Unit does not have the ability to process USPS, FedEx or UPS "paper mail." When providing any case documents to the Interstate Unit, please use the unit's Resource Accounts, fax or the Interstate/County DocuShare collection. Case documents include request packets, completed Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) home studies, 100Bs, supervisory reports, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) documents, etc.

Resource Accounts:

[RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov) for ICPC cases

[RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov) for ICAMA cases

Interstate Unit Fax Number: 717-425-5562

In a runaway situation, email Amanda Behe at [abehe@pa.gov](mailto:abehe@pa.gov) or Natalie (Primak) Mwaniki at [nmwaniki@pa.gov](mailto:nmwaniki@pa.gov).

### Clearance Verification Unit

Childline's Clearance Verification Unit (CVU) provides eligible individuals with the following three clearances: Child Abuse History Clearance, FBI Fingerprint Clearance and National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). The Pennsylvania (PA) Child Abuse History clearance can be submitted and paid for online through the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) self-service portal at Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information Solution. Applicants can view and print their results online.

CVU will also accept PA Child Abuse History Clearance applications in paper format for anyone who may not have access to the internet. Results for paper applications are mailed to the appropriate address noted on the form, and within 14 days of the date, that application is received in CVU.

*Continued on p. 11*

The Commonwealth's vendor for digital fingerprinting is IDEMIA (also referred to as Identogo or MorphoTrust). The fingerprint-based background check is a multi-step process. For general questions about FBI clearances, please contact the FBI Background Check Unit at 1-877-371-5422. For IDEMIA registration, processing, or billing questions, please contact IDEMIA/Identogo at 1-844-321-2101. To register online go to [www.identogo.com](http://www.identogo.com) or call 1-844-321-2101 and listen to the options menu.

CVU is responsible for processing out-of-state clearances for resource parents, including adoptive and foster parents, when a resource parent has resided outside of Pennsylvania within the past five years. Prospective foster and adoptive parents required to obtain an Out-of-State Child Abuse clearance are **no longer required** to submit the clearance to ChildLine for interpretation **IF** the clearance shows *no result (or no record)*. Out-of-State Child Abuse clearances with **ANY** result or record **are required** to be submitted to ChildLine for interpretation.

Visit [Keep Kids Safe | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#) for additional information regarding the clearance or call us at 877-371-5422.

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

P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675  
717-787-3984  
[www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov)

**From the SWAN Prime Contract**

*Diakon-SWAN, LLC/Voce*

**SWAN Family Matching E-Learning Courses**

Two new courses are now available in the SWAN E-Learning Center: *SWAN Family Matching* and *Supervising SWAN Family Matching*. Both courses provide comprehensive instruction to support staff in completing the Family Matching Unit of Service, from initial referral through completion.

The *SWAN Family Matching* course provides in-depth instruction on completing benchmarks and templates, including the Family Matching Plan and Log, Family Matching Assessment for Unmatched Families and Predictions Form. The course also includes examples of thoroughly completed documents. Additional training covers matching activities, exchanging child and family information and strategies for keeping families engaged throughout the matching process.

The *Supervising SWAN Family Matching* course is designed specifically for supervisors. It addresses staff education and training, oversight and clinical supervision of work in progress and administrative responsibilities related to the SWAN Portal, referrals and caseload management.

Both comprehensive courses feature interactive activities, quizzes and discussion points designed to reinforce learning and support the transfer of knowledge into practice. Participants will also hear from experienced workers through videos that provide real-world practice experiences, helpful strategies and practical tips.

The [SWAN E-Learning Center](#) is a convenient, dynamic resource designed to meet the needs of busy staff. Courses are easily accessible to anyone inside or outside the network and can be completed at any time. Users can begin a course, pause as needed to attend to other responsibilities, and return later to pick up where they left off.

### **Child Preparation Recipes for Success Updated**

The *Child Preparation Recipes for Success* is a collection of engaging, child- and youth-friendly activities developed and shared over the years by members of Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network. These activities are used as part of the SWAN Child Preparation Unit of Service to help children and youth explore the five goals of child preparation:

- Give the Child a Voice;
- Honor the Past;
- Answer the Child's Questions;
- Make Connections; and
- Look to the Future.

We're excited to announce that **31 new activities** have recently been added to the collection, bringing the total number of activities to **267**. Be sure to explore the new additions by accessing the [Recipes for Success](#) booklet in the SWAN Permanency Toolkit: [Recipes for Success booklet](#).

Submissions for new Child Preparation activities are welcome at any time. If you have an activity that you would like to contribute, download the [submission form](#) from the SWAN Permanency Toolkit.

Completed forms can be sent to SWAN Program Technical Assistant **Rachel Beals** at [rbeals@diakon-swan.org](mailto:rbeals@diakon-swan.org). Submitted activities will be reviewed and, once approved, added to the *Child Preparation Recipes for Success* collection.

Thank you to everyone who continues to share creative, meaningful activities that help children and youth have a voice in their permanency journey.

### **SWAN Family Approval Document and Guidelines Updated**

The *SWAN Family Approval Document and Guidelines* have been revised to incorporate Philadelphia DHS requirements into a single, unified set of documents. This update eliminates the need to maintain separate versions and streamlines the process for agencies across the network.

*The updated Family Approval Document and Guidelines are required for all SWAN Family Profile referrals received after September 1,*

2026. Both documents are available in the SWAN Permanency Toolkit:

[SWAN Family Approval Document](#)

[SWAN Family Profile Guidelines](#)

The updated SWAN Family Approval Document and Guidelines were presented and reviewed at the August 25, 2026 Unit of Service meeting, which highlighted statewide updates. In addition, the prime contractor provided two virtual training sessions for Philadelphia County workers and affiliates on August 27 and September 1, 2026. These sessions focused on the Philadelphia County-specific updates incorporated into the revised documents. Debrief meetings are also being offered to Philadelphia County-focused affiliate agencies.

For ongoing support, questions or assistance with implementation, reach out to your SWAN regional technical assistant or program technical assistant.

### **SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) Incarceration Resource Manual, 6th Edition Coming Soon**

We are excited to announce that the development of the sixth edition of the *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual (IRM)* is underway. The IRM remains a valuable, comprehensive tool for child welfare professionals to use in case planning with incarcerated parents and to support the county agencies' efforts to engage with these parties. The manual provides protocols for each county correctional facility in Pennsylvania, including:

- Guidance on 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 to the incarcerated parents to support reunification and permanency efforts.

The IRM is focused on sharing information specific to Pennsylvania's county prison facilities. However, the IRM also includes links to resources available to assist in case planning for parents incarcerated in state or federal facilities.

If you have any questions about the IRM or have updates about a facility's protocols,

*Continued on p. 13*

contact [lsiirmupdates@diakonswan.org](mailto:lsiirmupdates@diakonswan.org). Our target release date for the 6th edition of the IRM is late 2026.

### A Review of SWAN LSI Activities in State Fiscal Year 2025-2026

As we reflect on the close of another successful year, data collected from the SWAN Portal illustrates that SWAN LSI remains a cornerstone of SWAN's mission to achieve timely permanency for Pennsylvania's children in out-of-home care. LSI paralegals support and collaborate with county children and youth agencies, which are integral to navigating the ever-changing child welfare system.

Between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, SWAN LSI paralegals performed essential tasks, providing legal support for cases involving 26,888 unique children. This number is remarkably consistent with the 27,085 unique children whom LSI served in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-2025, indicating that SWAN LSI's dedication and efforts are both continuous and impactful.

Diligent Search remains a vital tool for helping counties locate missing individuals and identify connections for youth in care. In SFY 2025-2026, LSI paralegals performed a total of 20,435 diligent search activities, up from 18,972 the previous year. More than half (50.5%) of all searches were performed to locate a missing parent, while 31% were performed to comply with family finding requirements. During this time, 10,749 unique children had at least one diligent search performed for them. This number is up from 10,388 during the previous SFY and represents 40% of all children served by SWAN LSI.

County children and youth agencies across Pennsylvania depend on LSI paralegals for court-related endeavors to maximize the efficiency of both Juvenile and Orphans Court processes. Paralegals work tirelessly in the lead-up to important hearings and often attend to support county solicitors and caseworkers. During SFY 2025-2026, LSI paralegals performed 91,154 total Juvenile Court activities, including attending 19,497 hearings and preparing 40,816 legal documents. LSI paralegals also performed 13,433 total Orphans Court activities, including drafting 3,077 petitions for termination of parental rights. Additionally, SWAN LSI paralegals completed 1,624 adoption-related activities.

Looking ahead to SFY 2026-2027, SWAN LSI welcomes new opportunities to strengthen its collaboration with county children and youth agency partners, as well as the many committed professionals throughout the network, to achieve positive outcomes for children and families across Pennsylvania.

### The Importance of a High-Quality Photo

SWAN permanency professionals have made significant progress in improving recruitment photos for Pennsylvania's waiting children and youth. To ensure photos appear clear and professional on AdoptPAKids and can be used for printed recruitment materials, keep the following requirements in mind:

#### *Photo Requirements*

- Use high-resolution images. PAE recommends original photos that are at least 1000 x 1000 pixels or approximately 2–3 MB.
- Allow enough time to prepare the child or youth for the photo, and ensure clothing is clean and neat, and appearance is well-groomed.
- Use the "portrait" setting on your phone, which tends to blur the background and highlight the subject.
- Be aware of distracting backgrounds and avoid seasonal cues, such as Christmas trees. Outdoor photos often work well because natural light and simple backgrounds help keep the focus on the child or youth.
- Be careful when transferring photos from a phone. Email and messaging apps may automatically reduce image quality or send a smaller version.

#### *Best Ways to Preserve Photo Quality*

- **USB cable:** Connect the phone directly to a computer and copy or drag the original photo file.
- **Email or messaging apps:** Select full resolution, original size, large or high-quality when available.
- **iPhone:** Use AirDrop or an iCloud link.
- **Android:** Use Quick Share, Google Drive, Google Photos or another cloud-storage service.

*Continued on p. 14*

### *If the Photo is Too Large*

If a photo is too large to upload to the SWAN Portal, email the original image to the child's assigned PAE coordinator.

### **Previous Agency Affiliation (PAA) Requests for Applicants Under 21**

PAA Requests cannot be run in the SWAN Portal for resource family applicants under 21 years old; however, a workaround is available. Email the applicant's information to the PAE family coordinator, Alexandra Newcomer ([anewcomer@diakon-swan.org](mailto:anewcomer@diakon-swan.org)). Include the applicant's full name, date of birth, address and Social Security number. The Social Security number is not required, but it is the best way to confirm identity against existing family records. The PAE family coordinator will work with a PAE data analyst, who will run the search manually and send the results directly to you. As a reminder, approving a resource family applicant who is under 21 requires a DHS Regulation Waiver, which should be indicated in the family's CY131 under Foster Care Disposition at the time of approval, along with the DHS Waiver number.

### **CY131 Reminders**

- Reference the "CY131 Registration Form Instructions" found in the Support Documents section of the SWAN Portal for information on what is required in each section.
- When registering or updating foster and kinship families, as well as adoptive families who already have an identified child, "Matching Required" should always be set to "No," and you can skip the 68 questions in the "Characteristics" section.
- If you have a single parent record, do not add a second applicant onto the same family record if the one-parent family has become a two-parent family. Instead, close out the single applicant record via CY131 and create a new two-parent record via CY131.

### **Resource Family Registry (RFR) Consultations**

The PAE family coordinator is always available to schedule a virtual RFR consultation with your agency to demonstrate how to use the portal and answer any questions you or your workers have

about family records, CY131s and PAA requests. To schedule a consultation, contact your SWAN regional technical assistant.

### **Save the Date for the 2027 Pennsylvania Farm Show**

January 9-16 in Harrisburg

Milkshakes, baby goats, rodeos, unique food, parking passes and more can be found at the Pennsylvania Farm Show! This event is a fun opportunity for the network to interact with the public and raise awareness about foster care, adoption and permanency. Consider volunteering to help staff the SWAN booth and interact with thousands of members of the public. [Sign-up information will be coming in November.](#)

Questions? Contact PAE coordinator Rachel Paashaus ([rpaashaus@diakon-swan.org](mailto:rpaashaus@diakon-swan.org)) or Robert Brockman ([rbrockman@diakon-swan.org](mailto:rbrockman@diakon-swan.org)). To learn more about the Farm Show, check out our promo video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJnecx8s\\_qE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJnecx8s_qE).

### **Save the Date for the 2026 Virtual Matching Event (VME)**

The 2026 Statewide VME will be live November 13–20, 2026. Agencies will receive early access beginning October 26<sup>th</sup> to update and refresh their booth. Use this time to remove outdated materials and prepare new content that highlights the families and youth you're recruiting for. Set aside time **October 26–November 6** for "booth remodeling."

Feedback from the network, especially families, is loud and clear: **people want more videos!** We recommend that agencies begin planning and creating brief (2–3-minute max) videos that showcase the strengths and personalities of both the youth and the families you're recruiting! In the meantime, work to identify who at your agency will serve as your booth point person and/or booth designer. Questions? Send an email to [pae@diakon-swan.org](mailto:pae@diakon-swan.org).

### **New Diligent Search Resources Available**

SWAN LSI staff have been diligently searching on behalf of County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) and connections for kids for nearly twenty-five years. Over the years, SWAN LSI has

*Continued on p. 15*

developed resources to support the network on search activities. *The SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet* is a tool developed for the network to support concurrent planning and best practices with family search and engagement. It is the go-to resource for anyone conducting a search for missing parents, trying to locate and engage kin in case planning, or identifying resources if out-of-home placement is needed.

We are pleased to announce the release of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet*, which is located [on the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

In conjunction with the updated Diligent Search Packet, SWAN LSI developed a **new training titled *Diligent Search***. This training provides the foundation for thorough, diligent search practice. Participants will be guided through the comprehensive search packet, which outlines the search process and ensures compliance with the laws and regulations governing search and family finding practice. This training is beneficial for all audiences, including those who request searches for children on their caseloads and practitioners of diligent search. Reach out to your SWAN LSI coordinator or regional technical assistant for more information or to request a training.

### Did You Know? Authorized Representative (AR) Resources are Available

SWAN offers virtual quarterly support groups for staff trained on adoption search and appointed as their agency AR. These groups reinforce Act 101 regulations, share search tips and techniques, and provide an opportunity to ask questions and brainstorm with other adoption search professionals.

Outside of the support groups sessions, a statewide AR Google Group is available for questions and suggestions, allowing ARs to share knowledge and support one another anytime.

Act 101 of 2010 and the implementation bulletin are available on the SWAN Permanency Toolkit for reference. Act 101 training for newly appointed ARs is offered annually and can be retaken as needed.

Central Region Technical Assistance Division Manager **Kelly Weston** is available to answer questions directly at: [kweston@diakon-swan.org](mailto:kweston@diakon-swan.org) or 717-558-7288.

### Authorized Representative (AR) Training

The next Act 101 training for newly appointed ARs is scheduled for **January 7, 2027, from 9:00 – 4:00** in the auditorium at 300 Corporate Center Dr., Camp Hill. The registration link will follow.

The next AR Quarterly Support Group Meeting will be on **October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 10:00 – 12:00**. Join the Zoom meeting at: <https://zoom.us/j/91005331956>.

### Diakon-SWAN Website Redesign

The SWAN prime contractor is working to update and redesign the SWAN prime contract's website, [diakon-swan.org](http://diakon-swan.org). This project will include updated website infrastructure and a new user interface to make finding information easier and more accessible. The prime contractor's website hosts news from the SWAN program, upcoming event listings, a network directory and helpful permanency resources. The intended launch date for the new website is January 2027.

#### SWAN Prime Contract

200 Corporate Center Drive Suite 100B  
PO Box 959

Camp Hill, PA 17011

Ph: 717-236-8490 | Fax: 717-236-8510

[www.diakon-swan.org](http://www.diakon-swan.org)

[www.dhs.pa.gov/AdoptPAkids](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/AdoptPAkids)



/adoptpakids



/adoptpa

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

### **Speaker's Bureau**

The CWRC Speaker's Bureau will continue as a valuable opportunity for youth with lived experience in the child welfare system to share their perspectives and help inform programs, policies, and initiatives. The Speaker's Bureau currently includes a dedicated group of youth who are available to support efforts that seek youth voice, feedback, and meaningful input.

These young people bring unique experiences and insights that can help organizations, partnerships, and professionals better understand the needs of youth involved in the child welfare system. Speaker's Bureau members may participate in conferences, panel discussions, focus groups, advisory meetings, training events, and other opportunities where youth perspectives can strengthen planning and decision-making.

CWRC is interested in connecting with additional young people who want to become involved in the Speaker's Bureau. Youth who are passionate about sharing their experiences, advocating for positive change, and helping improve services for others are encouraged to express their interest.

Interested youth or requests from organizations seeking youth speakers, panelists, or participants to support initiatives, projects, and discussions that would benefit from authentic youth voice and input can be sent to Carl Butler IV at [CLB379@pitt.edu](mailto:CLB379@pitt.edu) or by phone at 717-795-9048.

### **SAT Waivers**

As the new school year is now underway, many of our high school juniors and seniors are not only working toward their high school diploma or GED certificate, but they may also be considering their options for post-secondary 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 SAT tests. Below you will find some additional information about the waivers, as well as the Resource Center's process

on how to obtain a waiver code for your youth.

- The Child Welfare Resource Center will be distributing SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Test Electronic Fee Waiver codes to aid Pennsylvania's Older Youth in continuing their higher education.
- The SAT Waiver Request Form should be completed by the county children and youth agency, or the private provider agency contracted by the county  
[Staff Resources: Education Services | Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board](#) .
- Completed forms should be emailed, as an attachment to Julie Hill, [jah721@pitt.edu](mailto:jah721@pitt.edu) . Please keep in mind the deadline for each testing date and allow enough time to process the paperwork.
- Upon receipt of the request, an electronic fee waiver code will be sent to the requestor.
- Students receive two (2) College Application Fee Waivers on their College Board account after they take an SAT test using a fee waiver code. The same code can be used for both SAT tests.

In addition to providing an overview of the process, I would like to take this opportunity to address the use of waivers. In previous years, the high absentee rates raised concerns from the College Board. Test-day absenteeism among fee-waiver recipients not only results in a monetary loss, but it also results in lost opportunities for students. Below are four main concerns students have identified as reasons for missing the test.

- Access to transportation/directions
- Better preparation and more confidence
- A closer test center location
- More encouragement and reminders

With this in mind, we are asking that every effort be made to ensure youth have the support they need to be prepared to take the test. Specific questions regarding the SAT waiver should be directed to the College Board: SAT Customer Service at (866) 756-7346.

Questions regarding how to obtain an electronic fee waiver code may be directed to Julie Hill at [jah721@pitt.edu](mailto:jah721@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:

- PA Youth Advisory Board website includes information for youth and staff  
[Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board](#)
- PA Child Welfare Resource Center website  
[University of Pittsburgh: Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center](#)
  - Including webinars specific to older youth  
[Webinars - University of Pittsburgh: Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center](#)
- PA Youth Advisory Board Facebook page  
[Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board | Mechanicsburg PA | Facebook](#)
- Weekly Older Youth Resource Emails  
[Weekly Older Youth Resource Emails | Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board](#)

### NYTD Council Engagement

The CWRC has developed an online training designed to help youth gain a better understanding of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and the importance of participating in NYTD surveys. The training focuses on communicating why NYTD matters, how survey responses are used, and the impact youth feedback has on shaping services, supports, and policy decisions for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. As the training is shared with regional and local Youth Advisory Boards (YABs) across Pennsylvania and posted on the YAB website, the focus is on ensuring this information reaches youth at the grassroots level. By providing accessible information through existing youth networks, YAB meetings, and youth-led discussions, OCYF and CWRC aim to increase awareness of NYTD and help youth understand that their voices play a critical role in identifying needs, improving services, and informing future system changes.

Continued outreach efforts will emphasize the message that every survey response matters. Increasing awareness and understanding of NYTD at the local level helps create meaningful opportunities for youth to share their experiences and contribute directly to improvements in programs and services offered statewide

### YAB Consultant Recruitment

The Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board is seeking consultants for the North Central and Northwest regions. YAB consultants play a key role in supporting youth advocacy efforts regionally and advancing initiatives that improve outcomes for older youth in foster care. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating activities and communication for regional Youth Advisory Boards
- Organizing quarterly regional meetings and contributing to statewide YAB events
- Supporting community service projects that empower and engage youth.
- Assisting with legislative and policy efforts that elevate youth voices.

Individuals interested in learning more about the position may contact Carl Butler IV  
[CLB379@pitt.edu](mailto:CLB379@pitt.edu) at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.

### PA Statewide Youth Advisory Board

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay connected!

#### PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

403 E. Winding Hill Road  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
717-795-9048 | [www.payab.pitt.edu](http://www.payab.pitt.edu)