

**Statewide Adoption and Permanency**

**Network *and* Independent Living Services**

**2015 Winter Statewide Meeting**

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

[**Protecting**](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/) **Pennsylvania’s Children from Abuse and Neglect:**

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed the website, [KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/), to serve as the hub for information related to critical components impacting child protection including a link for mandated reporters to make reports of suspected child abuse electronically, training on child abuse recognition and reporting, information related to clearances and general information related to child protection.

The Department has also collaborated with the University of Pittsburgh’s, Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to develop a free, web-based training on recognizing and reporting child abuse. This training is approved in accordance with Act 126 of 2012 and Act 31 of 2104, for mandated and permissive reporters and can be found at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/).

Questions about the new Child Protective Services law may be emailed to

ra-pwcpslquestions@pa.gov.

**Special Transmittal on Acts 80 & 91 of 2012:**

On October 16, 2014, the Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) released a Special Transmittal which provides guidance related to the enactment of Acts 80 and 91 of 2012. Act 80 of 2012 amended the Adoption Opportunities Act and Kinship Care Act to allow for extension of subsidies for adoption and permanent legal custodian cases if certain criteria are met. Act 91 of 2012 amended the Juvenile Act to expand the definition of a child and allow youth to request the resumption of dependency jurisdiction up to age 21 if certain criteria are met.

This Special Transmittal replaces all prior drafts and versions released including the one signed and dated September 28, 2012. Counties are to use the guidance and attachments in this Special Transmittal to determine eligibility for subsidy extensions of all agreements in effect on or after July 1, 2012 and resumption of dependency jurisdiction.

If you have any questions, please email them to RA-ocyftitleiveqa@pa.gov.

**Youth Independent Living Services Bulletin and Appendix:**

On December 8, 2014, OCYF released Bulletin #3130-14-01 titled “Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines.” The purpose of this bulletin is to transmit updated guidelines and requirements for the successful development and implementation of Youth Independent Living (IL) services through County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) and their contracted service providers.  The bulletin does not mandate new services that are not already required by existing federal or state laws and is consistent with our efforts to implement the changes as required in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, The Patient Care and Affordable Care Act of 2010, The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011, and Act 91 of 2012. To view this bulletin, go to <http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/publications/bulletinsearch/index.htm>.

Once there, enter the desired search criteria and click “search.”

This bulletin rescinds and replaces OCYF Bulletins #3130-11-04 entitled Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines of July 8, 2011 and Bulletin #00-94-07 entitled Supervised Independent Living Guidelines of July, 1994.

Please direct any questions to the appropriate OCYF Regional Office.

**Continuous Quality Improvement:**

The new counties joining Phase V of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) effort have been announced!  Fulton, Mifflin and Union Counties will participate in their first Quality Service Review (QSR) during 2015.  Other repeat counties conducting QSRs in 2015 include Beaver, Lebanon, Philadelphia and Schuylkill.  Please contact Natalie Perrin at nperrin@pa.gov or at (717) 783-7376 for more information on CQI.

**Child and Family Services Plan:**

Pennsylvania’s 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) has been approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children’s Bureau (CB).  The CFSP is the state’s strategic 5-year plan for Title IV-B funded child welfare services.  The CFSP covers services administered using funds from Title IV-B subparts 1 and 2, such as family preservation, family support, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support services.  The CFSP also covers services administered under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and the Education and Training Voucher program (ETV).  The 2015-2019 CFSP will be posted to the PA Department of Human Services website in the near future.  Individuals interested in obtaining a copy of the plan in advance of the website posting may contact Natalie Perrin at nperrin@pa.gov.

**Federal Child Welfare Outcomes Report 2009-2012:**

On November 6, 2014, the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) submitted to Congress a report that provides information on state performance in seven child welfare outcome categories.

PA specific data can be accessed on pages 282-288 of the report which is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cwo-09-12>. Adoption specific data for 2013 broken down by state was also released by ACF on November 6 and can be accessed at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/adoption-data-2013>.

**Chafee Education and Training Grant Program:**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2014-2015 school year and directions on how to apply is available online.  The 2014-2015 maximum ETG award is tentatively $4,500 per student, not to exceed their cost of attendance.

Please continue to spread the word about the ETG for youth who are, or were, in out of home placement or adopted after age 16.  Youth ARE NOT required to participate in a formal IL program to be eligible to apply and receive an award.  Timely completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Pennsylvania State Grant and ETG applications is important.

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

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you work with youth receiving services who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programs at the Foster Care to Success website: [www.fc2sprograms.org](http://www.fc2sprograms.org).  Each state has its own individual application process.

If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or at (717) 214-6765.

**Higher Education Financial Preparation for 2014-2015:**The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available online for the 2014-2015 academic year.  The website address is fafsa.ed.gov. Students must complete (or update) the FAFSA to become eligible for federal and state financial aid.  Prospective students do not need to have finalized their school of choice however they must list their school preferences. Adding or changing schools after the application is submitted is a simple, online process.  Staff and adults are encouraged to assist youth as necessary and to inform them how to answer the dependency related questions, specifically question number 53 (Were you in foster care or a dependent ward of the court?)

**SWAN Media Schedule:**

SWAN’s new media campaign will air on network television and cable, rotating every two weeks through the months of January, February and March in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg markets.

An online paid word search campaign is currently running on Yahoo, Google Facebook and MSN.

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 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate, *Val’s Kids* is aired on WHTM abc 27 in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE TV 28, a Wilkes-Barre NBC affiliate. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for the children of PA.

If you have a child you would like featured on KDKA’s, ***Waiting Child***, please contact Ja-Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council at jjones@3riversadopt.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM’s, ***Val’s Kids***, please contact Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE’s, ***A Little Love,*** please contact Jill Ferraro Bruce at jferrarobruce@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-7292.

**SWAN ListServ through Google Groups:**The SWAN ListServ through Google Groups **is comprised of county children and youth agency workers and SWAN affiliate agency workers. The goal of the group is to facilitate special needs adoptions throughout PA.  All information posted on this site is confidential.  Anyone wishing to join this group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency or SWAN affiliate agency. If interested, please contact Joe Warrick by email at** jwarrick@pa.gov or at **(717) 214-6765.**

**SWAN-IL Network Newsletter:**

Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague are doing to promote permanency for the youth of PA! If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles, success stories, matching events or ideas to Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242. Pictures are always a great addition to any article. You can find the latest and past editions of this newsletter at [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org) under the Network Newsletter link.

**SWAN Online:**

Be sure to check out SWAN’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/adoptpa](http://www.facebook.com/adoptpa), and our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/adoptpakids](http://www.youtube.com/adoptpakids).