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Introduction

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) works to find permanent homes for children in Pennsylvania’s foster care system, and is recognized nationally for its accomplishments in helping these children find families.

SWAN helps implement the permanency process by coordinating the work of the various professionals who help find permanent homes for children in foster care. SWAN is led by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and is composed of: a prime contractor; county children and youth agencies; private child welfare agencies; advocates; attorneys; family courts; foster, kinship, permanent legal custodianship and adoptive parents; and others who recognize that all children need and deserve permanent loving homes.

Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE)

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE), established in 1979, has played a key role in the Commonwealth’s adoption system for the past 36 years. PAE provides adoption matching services for children:

- Who are legally free for 90 days and have no report of intention to adopt filed.
- For whom termination of parental rights is being pursued.

Services provided by PAE include registering children and families in the database so electronic matching can be performed, referring potential matches to the child’s and the family’s agencies, and providing trainings for workers and families at SWAN/Independent Living quarterly meetings and conferences.

The children served by PAE often face challenges such as a history of abuse and neglect, a history of multiple foster care placements, drug and alcohol exposure, special education needs, emotional challenges, intellectual disabilities, special medical care, physical disabilities or a history of running away. These children often face more than one of these challenges.

The data contained in this report reflects information about the children and families served by PAE from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. Pennsylvania finalized 1,849 foster care adoptions in calendar year 2015. Of these finalizations, 840 were children registered with PAE. Not all children who are adopted require PAE’s services.

Registering Children and Families

PAE accepts the registration of waiting children from Pennsylvania’s county children and youth agencies and from private adoption agencies. PAE also accepts registrations from agency-approved adoptive families, regardless of the state where the adoptive family lives. This policy helps Pennsylvania meet the Adoption and Safe Family Act’s requirements to eliminate all geographic boundaries that may hinder permanency for a child. SWAN policy requires that all waiting families who receive family profiles paid by the prime contractor be registered with PAE to maximize the opportunity for these waiting children to find a family. Database searches for waiting children and families are also conducted regularly to maximize placement opportunities.

Referrals for Waiting Children

PAE makes referrals for potential matches for Pennsylvania’s waiting children with registered families. Using demographic and behavioral characteristics, computer-suggested matches between registered children and families are forwarded to their respective agencies. Telephone and internet inquiries received from families or adoption caseworkers about specific children or families are also forwarded to the appropriate agency for potential matching considerations.
Training and Recruitment at SWAN/Independent Living Quarterly Meetings and Conferences

PAE provides education and training to permanency professionals at SWAN/Independent Living (IL) quarterly meetings and the Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference. PAE’s training and recruitment initiatives include:

- Providing monthly reviews of waiting children with SWAN county contacts and quarterly reviews of all recruitment efforts with the child’s county caseworker.
- Providing semi-annual on-site reviews of all children with a goal of adoption.
- Assisting agencies with the development of recruitment tools such as posters and child biographies with high-quality photos.
- Assisting with computer searches for suggested matches.
- Providing children’s posters for local community recruitment events.
- Contributing articles to the SWAN/IL Network News and the Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association’s newsletter.
- Facilitating television filming of waiting children at local stations.
- Facilitating matching events at the summer and winter SWAN/IL statewide meetings.
- Assisting agencies with local recruitment efforts.

Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR)

On October 27, 2010, Act 101, which amended the Adoption Act, was signed into law. Act 101 of 2010 established the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR), a statewide information registry for records and documents associated with all adoptions finalized or registered in Pennsylvania. The PAIR allows adoptees and birth parents to register information about themselves so adoptees can better understand their own past and its potential impact on their lives and the lives of their descendants. DHS developed procedures and forms for birth parents and adoptees to register with the PAIR which allows them to specify if identifying or non-identifying information may be released.

The PAIR expands the registration and search capabilities of those impacted by adoption. Siblings, if both are over 21, may register and search for each other. Descendants of deceased adoptees may register and search for medical and social information. For children under 18 years old, an adoptive parent or legal guardian may search on behalf of the adoptee. All agencies involved in adoptions finalized or registered in the Commonwealth are required to register medical and social information with the PAIR.


- 90 new birth families registered with PAIR.
- 109 new adoptees registered and inquired about PAIR.
49 birth family requests were registered with PAIR.

254 adoptee requests were registered with PAIR.

1,800 adoptees were registered by agencies with PAIR.

**Resource Family Registry (RFR)**

The department is required to maintain a Resource Family Registry (RFR) in which all foster, formal kinship, and adoptive parent applicants must be registered. Support for the RFR is provided by the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network’s prime contract with Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership with Family Design Resources. As of December 31, 2015, a total of 68,356 applicants have been registered with the RFR, and of that total:

- 15,970 applied for adoption.
- 39,956 applied for foster care.
- 18,086 applied for formal kinship care.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families Bulletin #00-03-03, Kinship Care Policy, defines formal kinship care as “the full-time nurturing and protection of a child who is separated from his parents and placed in the home of a caregiver who has an existing relationship with the child and/or the child’s family.” An existing relationship is:

- A relative of the child through blood or marriage.
- A godparent of the child as recognized by an organized church.
- A member of the child’s tribal organization.
- A significant positive relationship with the child or the child’s family.

In federal fiscal year 2015, 80.56% of children adopted from the Pennsylvania foster care system were adopted by their foster/kinship family.

**SWAN Helpline 1-800-585-7926 (SWAN)**

The toll-free SWAN Helpline, 1-800-585-7926 (SWAN), began in 1996 to respond to inquiries about adoption. Today, the SWAN Helpline is a central pathway for SWAN’s outreach efforts to families, often serving as the first point of contact for inquiring parents and potential adoptive and foster families. The SWAN Helpline averaged 256 calls per week in 2015, with higher volumes during media campaigns. Calls are fielded by a team of information and permanency referral specialists. In addition to answering incoming calls, the specialists also make follow-up calls to families who have requested additional support in the permanency process, provide callers with informational SWAN Family Packets, and make referrals to other agencies.


- 13,314 Total Calls:
  - 7,017 Incoming Calls
  - 6,297 Outgoing Calls
- 1,141 SWAN Family Packets mailed to callers
- 1,096 Referrals made to other agencies

In Pennsylvania’s Seamless System, PAE and the SWAN Helpline work together with county children and youth agencies and SWAN affiliate agencies to bridge the gap between waiting children and waiting, approved adoptive families. Qualified families who would like to learn more about a waiting child can contact the SWAN Helpline and receive additional information about a child who is posted to the [www.adooptpakids.org](http://www.adooptpakids.org) website.

PAE coordinators work directly with the child’s caseworker to get additional details about the child and review that information with the family. If the family remains interested in that child, PAE then notifies the child’s caseworker.

County caseworkers and SWAN affiliate agencies are also critical to the success of Pennsylvania’s Seamless System, as they routinely update information about the availability and status of children and families. Current information is key to keep the process moving and to ensure that in-depth information on each child is available to approved families.
Outreach Initiatives

Media Campaign 2015

#MeetTheKids, the department’s media campaign featuring youth from Pennsylvania’s foster care system, continued to be a popular recruitment tool to find foster and adoptive families for our waiting children and youth in 2015. A targeted television advertisement campaign ran January to March 2015 in the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Harrisburg/Lancaster/Lebanon/York area markets. Facebook and Google advertisements ran throughout the year across the Commonwealth as well.

In celebration of National Foster Care Month, print advertisements ran to promote foster care and adoption awareness in May 2015. Print advertisements targeting African-American and the LGBTQ communities ran in five newspapers and magazines, including: Philadelphia Gay News, Philadelphia Tribune, Pittsburgh Courier, Out In Pittsburgh, and G-Philly. The advertisements ran the entire month of May 2015. Online radio advertisements, through Pandora Radio, also ran during National Foster Care Month.

In addition to the media campaign, OCYF’s media contracts include subcontracts with three television stations: WHTM in Harrisburg, KDKA in Pittsburgh, and WBRE in Wilkes-Barre. All three stations ran waiting child segments and their reporters participated in unique child interviews that featured the interests of the child.

Website

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange’s website (www.adoptpakids.org) was created in 1999 to assist in matching waiting children with prospective, approved adoptive families. Administered by DHS, the website helps eliminate geographic boundaries as it recruits families who live outside Pennsylvania.

The most popular feature of the website is the photo album of Pennsylvania’s waiting children, which features photographs and personal stories about the children and serves as a powerful recruitment tool. The website also features:

- Information on how to become a foster parent.
- Information on how to become an adoptive parent.
- Information about the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network.
- Information about the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange.
- Access to a variety of forms.
- Information about post-permanency services.
- Frequently asked questions.

The website offers links to additional services and support group organizations:

- Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association
- National adoption organizations
- Medical and health related links
- Search and reunion services
- Organizations serving families and children with challenges
- Additional photo listing websites

Website Statistical Information 2015:

(Jan. 1, 2015 - Dec. 31, 2015)

- 2,006,711 Total website visits
- 285,325 Waiting Kids album visits
- 169,813 New visitors
- Device traffic:
  - 47.4% Desktop computer
  - 52.6% Mobile/Tablet

Demographics of website users:

- Gender:
  - 54% Male
  - 46% Female
• Age Range:
  o 28% between 18-24
  o 34% between 25-34
  o 16% between 35-44
  o 22% were 45 or older

• Top five cities include:
  o 6.6% Philadelphia, PA
  o 4.2% Pittsburgh, PA
  o 2.8% Washington, PA
  o 2% New York, NY
  o 1.9% Lancaster, PA

Social Media
SWAN operates a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/adoptpa) which includes profiles of waiting children, inspirational quotes, and frequently asked questions. In 2015, SWAN’s Facebook page had over 8,000 likes. This method of social media accounts for 32 percent of visitors to the website. Seventy-six percent of visits to SWAN’s Facebook page were on mobile devices, with the largest audience being women 25 to 34 years old (33%).

SWAN also hosts a YouTube page (www.youtube.com/adoptpakids) where videos of the media campaigns are housed.

Waiting Child
KDKA’s Waiting Child segment began in 1982 as a child-specific recruitment tool for children in the Pittsburgh area. Lynne Hayes-Freeland, a news anchor with CBS affiliate KDKA, engages and films the featured child in a chosen activity. The segments are shown in conjunction with commercials from SWAN and Wendy’s®. Families interested in adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline, visit www.adoptpakids.org, or call Three Rivers Adoption Council at (412) 471-8722. The segment airs on the 6 p.m. news every other Tuesday, at noon the next day, and again on the Lynne Hayes-Freeland Show, which airs on Saturdays and Sundays.

• Fourteen children were featured on the Waiting Child segment.
  o Five of those children had a family identified.
• Waiting Child has a 63% success rate for finding families for children in western Pennsylvania.
• Since the start of the program in 1982:
  o 585 children were interviewed.
  o 369 children were matched and found permanent homes.

Val’s Kids
Val’s Kids was established by SWAN in 2000 to recruit more central Pennsylvanian families for specific waiting children, often teenagers. Children were taken to a favorite location (mall, sports arena, a local park, etc.) and videotaped doing a fun activity. Valerie Pritchett, a news anchor/reporter for WHTM ABC27, a Harrisburg affiliate, talked to the children and their caseworkers about their needs, interests, what they were looking for in a family, and how long they had been waiting for permanency. During the segment, information was provided on how to inquire about these waiting children through the website (www.adoptpakids.org) and through the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. The show airs on ABC27 at 7 p.m. Wednesdays and again at 6 p.m. Sundays.

• Nine children were featured on Val’s Kids.
  o Three of those children had a family identified.
• Val’s Kids has a 38% overall success rate in finding families for waiting children in central Pennsylvania.
• Since the start of the program in 2000:
  o 315 children have been interviewed.
  o 104 adoptions have been finalized.
  o 16 of these children have been matched with adoptive families.

A Little Love

On February 14, 2007, WBRE-TV 28, an NBC affiliate, aired the first “A Little Love” segment in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area. A Little Love is the third segment funded through SWAN to help recruit families to adopt children in foster care and provide caseworkers with an additional recruitment tool for the children they serve.

A Little Love focuses on the featured children’s desires and ambitions. The host, Tim Kelchner, works closely with the community and the children’s caseworkers to decide on an exciting activity or event for the children to participate in. Each segment provides the opportunity to take the children’s desires and ambitions and turn them into an unforgettable experience. Some activities and events chosen by the children have included:

• Minor league sports
• Spas
• Guitar and singing lessons
• Amusement or water parks
• Magic shows

Throughout the segment, Mr. Kelchner talks with the children and their caseworkers about the children’s interests and what type of families they hope to become a part of. Families interested in adopting a child featured on A Little Love or who want to learn more about adoption are encouraged to contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-SWAN. A Little Love airs on Wednesdays between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. and on the 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. news.


• Ten children were aired on a segment of A Little Love.
  o Two of those children were matched and placed with families.
  o Eight of those children have yet to have families identified.

• Since the start of the program in 2007:
  o 103 children were interviewed in 100 segments.
  o 31 children were adopted.
  o Nine were matched and placed with permanent families.

• A Little Love has a 39% overall success rate in finding families for waiting children in northeast Pennsylvania.
Key Findings - 2015

Children Served by PAE in 2015
- 2,590 children were served (Chart 1)
- 1,235 new child registrations were received (Chart 1)
- 585 of the 2,590 children, or 22.6%, were age 13 to 18 (Chart 3)
- 679 of the 2,590 children, or 26.2%, were placed in adoptive homes (Chart 1)
- 840 of the 2,590 children, or 32.4%, were finalized for adoption (Chart 1)

Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 2)
- 2,112 families were served
- 749 families, or 35.5%, were active and still waiting for an adoptive placement at the close of the calendar year
- 547 of the 2,112 families, or 25.9%, accepted an adoptive placement in 2015
- 918 new families were registered
Children Served by PAE in 2015
Total Children Served - 2,590
(Chart 1)

Note: Not all children who are available for adoption are registered with PAE. (See page 3 for registration requirements.)
Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2015
Total Families Served – 2,112
(Chart 2)
Age of Children Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 3)

- 1,286 of the 2,590 children, or 49.7%, were age 0 to 7
- 607 of the 2,590 children, or 23.4%, were age 8 to 12
- 585 of the 2,590 children, or 22.6%, were age 13 to 18
- 112 of the 2,590 children, or 4.3%, were over age 18
Age and Gender of Prospective Adopters Served by PAE in 2015
(Chart 4)

- 1,688 prospective adopters were male
  - Two were age 24 and under, representing 0.1% of the total
  - 293 were age 25 to 35, representing 17.4% of the total
  - 631 were age 36 to 45, representing 37.4% of the total
  - 762 were age 46 and older, representing 45.1% of the total

- 1,997 prospective adopters were female
  - Six were age 24 and under, representing 0.3% of the total
  - 339 were age 25 to 35, representing 17% of the total
  - 717 were age 36 to 45, representing 35.9% of the total
  - 935 were age 46 and older, representing 46.8% of the total
Race of Children Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 5)

- 2,590 children were served
  - 1,401 children, or 54.1%, were Caucasian
  - 948 children, or 36.6%, were African American
  - 208 children, or 8%, were mixed race

- 12 children, or 0.5%, were Asian
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Native American
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Note: The races of eleven children are unknown. Hispanic children are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and not as a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in this pie chart.
Race of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 6)

• 2,112 adoptive families were served
  o 1,694 of the families, or 80.2%, were Caucasian
  o 267 of the families, or 12.6%, were African American
  o 137 of the families, or 6.5%, were of mixed race
  o Five families, or 0.2%, were Native American
  o Two families, or 0.1%, were Asian

Note: Seven families did not provide race. Hispanic families are not included in the pie chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and not as a part of race. These families are categorized as Caucasian in this pie chart.
Comparison of the Race of Families and the Race of Children Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 7)

- 1,401 children, or 54.1%, were Caucasian
  - 1,694 families, or 80.2%, were Caucasian
- 948 children, or 36.6%, were African American
  - 267 families, or 12.6%, were African American
- 208 children, or 8%, were of mixed race
  - 137 families, or 6.5%, were of mixed race
- 12 children, or 0.5%, were Asian
  - Two families, or 0.1%, were Asian
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Native American
  - Five families, or 0.2%, were Native American
- Five children, or 0.2%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
  - Zero families were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Note: The races of eleven children and seven families are unknown. Twelve Asian children, five Native American children, five Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children, two Asian families, and five Native American families are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent of the children and families served.
Gender of Children Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 8)

- 1,356 children were male, representing 52.4% of the total
- 1,234 children were female, representing 47.6% of the total

Gender Preferences of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 9)

- 1,337 families, or 63.3%, did not have a gender preference
- 405 families, or 19.2%, preferred to adopt a female child
- 370 families, or 17.5%, preferred to adopt a male child
Size of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 10)

- 2,590 children were served
  - 753, or 29.1%, belonged to a sibling group:
    - 505 children, or 67.1%, belonged to a sibling group of two
    - 156 children, or 20.7%, belonged to a sibling group of three
    - 72 children, or 9.6%, belonged to a sibling group of four
    - 20 children, or 2.7%, belonged to a sibling group of five or more
  - The 753 children belonged to a total of 513 individual sibling groups

Note: All members of a sibling group do not necessarily receive PAE services.
Race of Sibling Groups Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 11)

- Of the 753 children in sibling groups:
  - 343 children, or 45.6%, were Caucasian
  - 235 children, or 31.2%, were African American
  - 49 children, or 6.5%, were mixed race
  - Three children, or 0.4%, were Asian
  - Two children, or 0.3%, were Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
  - 121 children, or 16.1%, had an unknown race

Marital Status of Adoptive Families Served by PAE in 2015 (Chart 12)

- Of the 2,112 adoptive families served:
  - 1,678 families were couples, representing 79.5% of the total
  - 369 families were single females, representing 17.5% of the total
  - 65 families were single males, representing 3.1% of the total

Note: Hispanic children are not included in the chart because this characteristic is collected as a component of ethnicity and not as a part of race. These children are categorized as Caucasian in this chart. Three Native American sibling groups are not included in the chart above because they represent less than one percent or less of the children served in a sibling group.
Directory of Services

### Directory of Services

#### Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families

**HEADQUARTERS**

Office of Children, Youth and Families  
Department of Human Services  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675  
(717) 787-4756  
www.dhs.pa.gov

#### REGIONAL OFFICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>Office of Children, Youth and Families</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHEAST REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td>801 Market St. Suite 6112</td>
<td>(215) 560-2249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hilltop Building, 2nd Floor 3 Ginko Drive</td>
<td>(717) 772-7702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHEAST REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 Lackawanna Ave. Room 301, 3rd Floor</td>
<td>(570) 963-4376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td>11 Stanwix St. Room 260</td>
<td>(412) 565-5777</td>
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#### STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY NETWORK

**Prime Contractor for SWAN**  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries / Family Design Resources  
P.O. Box 4560  
471 JPL Wick Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17111  
1-888-793-2512  
www.diakon-swan.org

**Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange**  
P.O. Box 4469  
Harrisburg, PA 17111  
1-800-227-0225  
www.adoptpakids.org

**SWAN Helpline**  
1-800-585-SWAN (7926)

#### LOCAL AGENCY CONTACTS

For a list of County Children and Youth agencies, follow this link:  
(Click “County Children and Youth Agencies”, and then click “Submit Search”).

For a list of SWAN Adoption Agency Affiliates, follow this link:  
# Websites

## Government

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<td><a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov">www.acf.hhs.gov</a></td>
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| Commonwealth of Pennsylvania             |                                         |
| www.pa.gov                               |                                         |

| The Department of Human Services         |                                         |
| www.dhs.pa.gov                           |                                         |

| DHS Forms and Publications               |                                         |
| www.dhs.pa.gov/publications/findaform/index.htm |                                       |

| Child Welfare Information Gateway        |                                         |
| www.childwelfare.gov                     |                                         |

| U.S. Department of State                 |                                         |
| www.travel.state.gov                     |                                         |

| Pennsylvania Code Online                 |                                         |
| www.pacode.com                           |                                         |

| Pennsylvania General Assembly            |                                         |
| www.legis.state.pa.us                    |                                         |

## Children and Youth Services

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<th>Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.psrfa.org">www.psrfa.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Child Welfare Resources

| Child Protection in Pennsylvania             | Center for Schools and Communities             |
| www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov                     | www.center-school.org                           |

| Child Welfare League of America              | Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics |
| www cwla.org                                 | www.paaap.org                                   |

## Parenting and Family Resources

| Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance         | Parent to Parent                                |
| www.pa-fsa.org                               | www.parenttoparent.org                          |

| The National Fatherhood Initiative          | The Juvenile Law Center                        |
| www.fatherhood.org                          | www.jlc.org                                    |

## Adoption Resources

| AdoptUSKids                                  | Adoption.com                                   |
| www.adoptuskids.org                         | www.adoption.com                               |

| Adoption Knowledge Affiliates                | American Academy of Adoption Attorneys         |
| www.adoptionknowledge.org                    | www.adoptionattorneys.org                      |

| Dave Thomas Foundation                      | Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute |
| www.davethomasfoundation.org                | www.ccainstitute.org                           |

| Joint Council on International Children’s Services | National Adoption Center |
| www.jointcouncil.org                           | www.adopt.org                                |

| North American Council on Adoptable Children | Spaulding for Children |
| www.nacac.org                                 | www.spaulding.org                             |

| Three Rivers Adoption Council                | Together as Adoptive Parents                 |
| www.3riversadopt.org                         | www.taplink.org                               |