

Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association

Administrators' Resource Handbook



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March 2016

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Acknowledgements

The Pennsylvania Child Resource Center thanks the individuals who participated as members of the Quality Assurance Committee and those individuals who contributed to various sections of this handbook. The following persons participated in this process:

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Ellen Whitesell, Department of Human Services
Cathy Utz, Department of Human Services

The Resource Center would also like to express its appreciation to all the dedicated child welfare and other related professionals that assisted with the previous versions of the Administrators' Handbook that helped make this document a reality.

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Administrators' Resource Handbook

Developed in Collaboration with Pennsylvania Children & Youth Administrators Association, Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center

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How to use this Handbook:

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This handbook also contains links to external documents/resources outside of the handbook. To access those links, which are throughout the handbook, simply click on the link and you will be directed to the external document/resource.

ADMINISTRATION OF PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The purpose of children and youth social services is to provide for the care, protection, safety, and mental and physical development of children coming within the child welfare and juvenile justice system in our Commonwealth. The Federal [Adoption and Safe Families Act](#) (ASFA), which is the major federal law enacted to assist the states in protecting and caring for abused, neglected, and dependent children, establishes the following three primary tenets related to the delivery of child welfare services:

- To ensure that child safety is of paramount concern;
- That efforts are made to provide permanency for children in a timely manner; and
- That a child's well-being needs are addressed.

With these tenets in mind, emphasis is placed on preserving the unity of the family whenever possible and separating the child from his or her parents only when necessary for the child's welfare, health or safety or in the interest of public safety. When the unity of the family cannot be maintained, an alternative permanent family is vital to the health and development of children.

Pennsylvania's child welfare system is state-supervised and county-administered. State law prescribes the minimum standards for the county offices, state child welfare and juvenile justice services are organized, managed, and delivered by County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYA) and county Juvenile Probation Offices.

Services to children, youth, and their families may be provided by the CCYAs, purchased from provider agencies or a combination of both.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) [Office of Children, Youth and Families](#) (OCYF) is the agency that administers the state's child welfare program.

The mission of the [DHS](#) is to protect and serve Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens, to promote, improve, and sustain the quality of family life, and to break the cycle of dependency, while managing resources effectively and promoting respect for employees.

The primary focus of OCYF is always on the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children they serve. Through annual reviews of CCYAs, as well as OCYF-licensed child-serving homes and agencies, OCYF ensures the quality of services provided to and purchased for Pennsylvania's children and families.

Additionally, through reviews of annual county needs-based plan and budget (NBPB) requests and subsequent expenditure reimbursement, OCYF monitors the financial commitment and spending of the counties with regard to the children and youth services they deliver. The financial review focuses on the reasonableness and necessity of the

CCYA request and whether the CCYA plan and budget focuses on the state's goals of: increasing safety, improving permanency, safely reducing reliance on out-of-home care (particularly residential institutional programs), and decreasing re-entry into placement.

OCYF also is responsible for the administration of the state-operated juvenile justice facilities. These facilities are designed to provide state-of-the-art treatment, care, and custody services to some of Pennsylvania's most at-risk delinquent youth.

OVERVIEW OF PENNSYLVANIA CHILDREN & YOUTH ADMINISTRATORS

The mission of [PCYA](#) is to enhance the quality of service delivery for children, youth, and their families by providing for its members: (1) a forum for the exchange of information; (2) assistance in educating the general public and its constituencies; and (3) an environment of support for the Association members.



What is PCYA?

The Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA) association is a 501(c) (4) nonprofit corporation incorporated in 1969 and an affiliate of the [County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania](#) since 1983. The association represents all sixty-seven CCYAs in activities with other organizations and government officials and it facilitates ongoing networking and information sharing among its membership.

Services to Our Members

The PCYA engages in lobbying efforts on behalf of counties, monitors legislation, coordinates trainings for county child welfare solicitors, organizes quarterly statewide meetings, as well as regional and *ad hoc* meetings, to disseminate information to and from members including administrators, program staff, and fiscal officers. The PCYA prepares a weekly one-page newsletter regarding child welfare related issues, initiatives, and concerns. The weekly update is sent via email to all the members. The PCYA also utilizes video and audio conferencing, ListServes, and a website to assist members in sharing their innovations and concerns regarding practice, interpretations of regulations, funding and other matters.

The website address is www.pcy.org. The [website](#) has a public section that offers information in various categories, such as [Calendar of Events](#), [Job and Internship Postings](#), a list of all [Children and Youth agencies in Pennsylvania](#) and their contact information, information on the PCYA organization, and on the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

Administrators must register for permission to access the “Members Only” section. As a member, you will find information such as the results of surveys, conference registrations, and the sharing of forms and information on legislative policy positions.

The ListServe enables administrators and selected staff to interact around current practice and share experiences. Discussions range from specific inquiries regarding placement facility options for a child to analysis of new policy or allocations. Administrators must register for the ListServe through the PCYA staff.

The [By-Laws](#) of the PCYA were last amended on October 27, 2010. The By-Laws can be found by visiting www.pcy.org.

County Commissioners Association

As an affiliate of the [County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania \(CCAP\)](#), PCYA works in partnership with CCAP members to assure that their positions are coordinated with the other county human services affiliates. There is a wide network of other public and private human services providers, community stakeholders, and local, state and federal government officials who work together to enhance the effectiveness, cooperation, and collaboration of human services delivery to families and children. PCYA lobbying efforts are also coordinated with the CCAP.

Questions Regarding PCYA

Questions regarding [PCYA](#) and its services can be directed to Brian Bornman, Executive Director, bbornman@pacounties.org. The PCYA also can be contacted at PO Box 60769, Harrisburg, PA 17106; Phone (717)736-4736 or Fax: (717) 526-1020.

MEMBERSHIP OF PCYA

PCYA Officers and Board of Directors

The [PCYA](#) officers and board of directors provide leadership for the association. The officers are elected by the PCYA membership during a biennial election. The officers of the association and board members serve a two-year term. Each regional division may select up to two members to represent them on the board. A listing of the current board of directors is provided on the PCYA website and on the resource disk.



PCYA Membership

The [PCYA](#) represents all sixty-seven CCYAs in activities with other organizations and government officials. A complete listing of the Children and Youth administrators and their phone numbers by county is provided on the PCYA website and it is available on the resource disk.

Your Leadership Role as a County Children and Youth Administrator

Because of the rich diversity and wide variety of county-administered child welfare agencies, an administrator's role may vary considerably. What is effective in Westmoreland County, may not work in Lehigh County. What is standard practice in Philadelphia County, may not apply in Cameron County. Regardless of your location or size, it is an administrator's role to assure that children and families in your county achieve safety, permanence, and well-being in the most effective and efficient means possible.

The [PCYA](#) created the Leadership Academy Certificate Program to support administrators and key staff in leadership roles. This 27-hour voluntary certificate program begins with the *Foundations of Leadership*, a two-day (12.0 hours) session designed to introduce administrators to leadership and to principles and techniques of organizational effectiveness. The *Foundations of Leadership* training is offered up to four times a year.

To complete the voluntary certificate program, administrators or key staff must complete an additional 15.0 hours of elective courses offered throughout the year at the PCYA quarterly meetings or at other locations. The elective workshops are typically rotated among five knowledge tracks: Leadership, Fiscal, Organizational Development, Systems Integration, and Human Resource Development. As with all Leadership Academy offerings, administrators are encouraged to bring their management teams to the program.

At our quarterly meetings, completed administrators receive a certificate and recognition. The local commissioners are made aware of this accomplishment.

Children and Youth administrators meet quarterly to receive information, plan for the future, and discuss topics of interest to all. The quarterly meetings provide administrators the opportunity to meet with peers, network, and make contact with OCYF personnel.

To facilitate participation at your first PCYA meeting:

- Contact [PCYA](#) staff at (717) 736-4736 to introduce yourself and get the dates for the next quarterly meeting. The staff will also be able to identify your PCYA regional representatives.
- Most participants dress in business casual attire. Appropriate attire for the meetings varies with the season, travel requirements, and personal preference.
- The meetings typically begin on Wednesday at 1:00 pm. and end on Friday by noon. Training sessions are offered in conjunction with the meeting and are at no cost. However, you do need to register for the training sessions.
- If possible, plan to have your director(s) of social services, other manager(s) or fiscal officer(s) attend with you. Their background, understanding of the terminology and general knowledge will be helpful during the meeting.

In addition, meetings at the regional level are held periodically. You can contact your board representative for a schedule.

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES – OFFICE OF CHILDREN YOUTH AND FAMILIES

To carry out its various duties, OCYF is organized into four separate bureaus: The Bureau of Children and Family Services (BCFS), The Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support (BBFS), The Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations (BPPO), and The Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS).

Bureau of Children and Family Services (BCFS)

BCFS is primarily responsible for monitoring the delivery of services by county and private children and youth social service agencies, including foster care agencies, adoption agencies, and supervised independent living (SIL) programs throughout the Commonwealth. Oversight of these programs is conducted by the four OCYF Regional Offices.

The essential functions and responsibilities of the four OCYF Regional Offices:

- Monitoring, licensing, and providing technical assistance to the public and private children and youth social service agencies and SIL programs;
- Investigating child abuse when the alleged perpetrator is a county children and youth agency (CCYA) employee or one of its agents;
- Ensuring regulatory compliance of agencies and facilities by investigating complaints and conducting annual inspections;
- Assisting county and private agencies in the interpretation and implementation of DHS regulations;
- Conducting reviews of all Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities as a result of suspected child abuse that occur within the Commonwealth;
- Providing recommended levels of funding for CCYAs as a result of programmatic analysis of the county's Needs Based Plan and Budget submission;
- Provide state leadership in the Quality Service Reviews of county agencies;
- Responding to inquiries and providing information to families, providers, stakeholders, and the general public regarding the statutes, regulations, and DHS requirements and processes for operating a public or private children and youth agency, SIL programs, foster care agency, or adoption agency;
- Inspecting and monitoring regulated agencies for continual compliance;
- Providing technical assistance and consultation to agencies;
- Conducting complaint investigations to determine validity of allegations and performing follow-up as needed;

- Reviewing applications for new agencies from prospective providers;
- Preparing detailed reports of survey findings, recommendations for licensure status, and enforcement actions; and
- Providing information regarding the certification or licensing history of an agency.

Contact:

Roseann Perry, Bureau Director
11 Stanwix Street, Room 260
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-565-5168
rosperry@pa.gov

Southeast Regional Office

Office of Children, Youth and Families
801 Market Street
6th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Tel: (215) 560-2249 or (215) 560-2823
Fax: (215) 560-6893

Contact:

Raheemah Shamsid-Deen Hampton, Director
rshamsid-d@pa.gov

Counties Served: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia.

Western Regional Office

Office of Children, Youth and Families
11 Stanwix Street
Room 260
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Tel: (412) 565-2339 or (412) 565-5777
Fax: (412) 565-7808

Contact:

Amber Kalp, Director
akalp@pa.gov

Counties Served: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren, Washington, and Westmoreland.

Northeast Regional Office

Office of Children, Youth and Families
Scranton State Office Building
100 Lackawanna Avenue, 3rd Floor
Scranton, PA 18503
Tel: (570) 963-4376
Fax: (570) 963-3453

Contact:

Jacqui Maddon, Director
jmaddon@pa.gov

Counties Served: Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, and Wyoming.

Central Regional Office

Office of Children, Youth and Families
3 Ginko Drive
PO Box 2675
Hilltop Building, Second Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Tel: (717) 772-7702
Fax: (717) 772-7071

Contact:

Gabi Williams, Director
gawilliams@state.pa.gov

Counties Served: Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Union, and York.

Bureau of Budget and Fiscal Support (BBFS)

BBFS provides support functions for OCYF and county children and youth agencies, including budgeting, personnel, management of federal grants and revenue, fulfillment of needs-based budget mandates, and administrative, financial, and operational support. The BBFS increases fiscal accountability through cost reporting, recovery, containment, justification, and redistribution.

Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations (BPPO)

Cindi Horshaw, Acting Bureau Director
Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations
Tel: (717)-787-3985

The Bureau of Policy, Programs, and Operations develops and publishes program procedures and directives governing child welfare activities in the Commonwealth related to:

- The administration of public and private children and youth agencies,
- Foster family care,
- Adoption,
- Child residential and day treatment programs, and
- Child Protective Services.

The BPPO plans, develops, and implements new and revised regulations. In addition, it provides program clarifications, conducts training and orientation on new/revised procedures, provides analysis of and recommendations for proposed legislation, develops program reports and publications, and coordinates and provides technical assistance and training materials for OCYF regional office staff and service providers.

The Bureau is responsible for programs required by Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law and departmental regulations governing services to dependent and neglected children.

The Bureau oversees and manages special grants including the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Family Centers, and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The Bureau also coordinates with OCYF's Bureau of Budget and Program Support in applying for and managing grants for the development of child welfare services.

The Bureau is responsible for coordinating the data collection and analysis of child welfare data for OCYF, as well as for the county and private children and youth social services agencies.

The Bureau serves as the lead for the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Bureau also works closely with the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work's Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania to improve child welfare services and outcomes.

The Bureau is responsible for managing and operating the ChildLine and Abuse Registry and the three Interstate Compacts for Pennsylvania, which is located within the Division of Operations.

Division of Operations

Contact:

Dori Barnard, Division Director

DBARNARD@pa.gov

This Division is responsible for managing and operating the ChildLine and Abuse Registry and the three Interstate Compacts for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It develops and maintains the operational and procedural manuals for these key activities. Within the Division of Operations are the following areas:

ChildLine and Abuse Registry

ChildLine is part of a mandated statewide child protective services program designed to prevent and reduce initial child abuse and to reduce the incident and rate of repeated child abuse in the Commonwealth through the operation of a 24-hours per day, 7 days per week centralized toll-free telephonic reporting system (1-800-932-0313). ChildLine caseworkers are essential staff and receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect from the general public, mandated reporters, county children and youth agencies, and other state child protective service units. Information from the interviews is analyzed to determine what type of report is needed. Subjects are checked for prior histories and the reports are forwarded to the county children and youth agencies or Regional Offices of Children Youth and Families for investigation. Child abuse investigations are reviewed to ensure compliance with the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and accuracy of information for the child abuse statewide central registry. ChildLine caseworkers also provide technical assistance to child protective service staff, mandated reporters, and community organizations regarding the CPSL. Information is provided to the Megan's Law Board who determines if someone is a sexually violent predator.

Verification Unit (background checks)

Applicants are required to submit a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance application (CY113) to ChildLine for processing. Staff in the ChildLine Verification Unit reviews the submitted applications for completeness and accuracy and then enters the information into ChildLine's data base system. Staff then searches the Pennsylvania statewide central register to match applicants to the perpetrators listed in the registry. Applicants who are not listed in the Pennsylvania statewide central register will receive a child abuse clearance certificate. Applications can be submitted for various reasons including: child care service employment, foster care, adoption, school employment, volunteers, employment with a significant likelihood of regular contact with children, and for applicants who participate in the Department of Human Services Employment & Training Program.

Carecheck Unit

The Carecheck Unit designed to review applications for relatives or neighbor childcare providers who care for children in the County Assistance Office's subsidized child care program. Staff performs child abuse background clearances on applicants in the Child Care Management Information System, submitted by the County Assistant Offices and Child Care Information Service. This Unit also conducts Pennsylvania State Police

(PSP) criminal background clearances on these applicants to determine if the applicant is listed as a perpetrator of a founded child abuse report within the past five years and/or has been convicted of a prohibited criminal conviction per the CPSL.

Adam Walsh/FBI Background Check Unit

Applicants must have their finger prints scanned at one of the Cogent Systems fingerprint locations throughout the state. Cogent Systems then sends their fingerprints to the FBI electronically. Within 24 – 72 hours, staff receives the criminal history records from the FBI if the applicant has crimes listed in the national crimes database. Staff in the Adam Walsh Unit interpret the results to determine if the applicant has been convicted of a crime that is equivalent to a prohibitive hire as outline in § 6344 (c) of the CPSL. Staff will then forward a certification results letter, including a copy of the rap sheet to the applicant. The applicant is responsible for sharing the information contained in the federal criminal history background check with their employer or foster care/adoption agency. Applicants who do not have a criminal record receive a results letter via an electronic mailing process set up between Cogent Systems and the Department's Bureau of Information Systems and therefore our background checks staff does not process FBI clearances for applicants with no criminal records.

Other Information Related to Background Check Processes

Pennsylvania's Background Check Units process child abuse and neglect registry checks from other states when requests are received from other states. This process requires prospective foster, adoptive, Community Rehabilitation Residential (CRR) host home families, and respite provider parents, as well as adult household members to obtain certification from the Statewide central registries from any state in which they have resided within the previous five-year period. Applicants and adult household members must obtain and complete the appropriate out of state form(s) and any additional required documentation or payment as required by the specific state(s) send them to ChildLine along with their submission for their Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearances. ChildLine will then submit the completed applications to any additional state(s). ChildLine also interprets the results of other state child abuse history clearances to determine whether the individual's status is equivalent to a founded report of child abuse in Pennsylvania. If our office determines that an individual is named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse in another state within the previous five-year period, then the foster or adoptive home is prohibited from being approved. ChildLine will then forward a letter specifying the results to the requesting applicant and/or agency.

Quality Assurance

Staff in the Quality Assurance/Administrative Support Unit is responsible for the input of child abuse investigations from the Child Protective Service Investigation Reports (CY48) received from county children and youth agencies and regional offices. Perpetrators are entered in the Pennsylvania statewide central register based on the

information received on the CY48. Searches are performed for prior cases and related cases in order to update outdated information on subjects of new child abuse investigation cases. Court decisions that result in findings related to child abuse cases are used to update the status determination. Subject requests are received from individuals or attorneys on behalf of an individual. Redacted copies are sent to these individuals per guidelines. Monthly expunctions of cases are performed either by the child turning age 18 or 23 (for Substantiated cases) and also for unfounded cases (held for approximately 13 months.) Updates are done when forwarded to us from the Verification Unit to maintain current information on subjects of cases. Agency updates – information is kept current for on-call books, ChildLine’s data base system in order for caseworkers to be able to contact the appropriate personnel regarding child abuse reports.

Child Abuse Appeals Unit

Persons whose names appear on Founded or Indicated child abuse reports exercise their right to appeal, expunge, or amend a report of child abuse as permitted by the CPSL. The appeal unit is responsible for preparing each appeal for the Department of Human Services Administrative Review and/or a hearing with the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals. Each appeal is then tracked until a final decision is made which at times could end with a final decision from the Commonwealth Court.

Interstate Compact Office

The Interstate Compact Office is responsible for three interstate compacts. Interstate compacts are legal agreements signed and passed into law by each member state. Compacts require all states to uniformly comply with the articles, rules, and regulations that are contained within the compact or later passed by the member states through a voting process. The Pennsylvania Interstate Office consists of a Director, six Interstate Compact Specialists, and one secretary.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children - (ICPC)

Pennsylvania passed this Interstate Compact into law in 1973. This compact provides legal guidelines and requirements for managing interstate placements of children into and out of the state for the purpose of adoption, foster care, parental care, and residential placement care. It provides a coordinated method for studying the prospective placement and providing supervision in the receiving state while legal authority over the child remains in the sending state until certain specified conditions are met.

The Interstate Office is also responsible for foreign adoptions when the adoption is not finalized in the foreign country or when both parents do not travel to the foreign country to finalize the adoption (proxy adoption).

The Interstate Compact for Juveniles - (ICJ)

Pennsylvania passed this Interstate Compact into law in 1955. This compact provides legal guidelines and requirements for managing delinquent juveniles when moving into or out of the state to live with parents or relatives. This compact provides a coordinated method to study the prospective home and the transfer the supervisory responsibilities to the receiving state while keeping the legal authority with the original court in the sending state until certain conditions are met. The ICJ is also responsible for assisting in the return of runaways when the child is a Pennsylvania child or if a runaway from another state is picked up or captured in Pennsylvania.

Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance - (ICAMA)

Pennsylvania passed this Interstate Compact into law in 2002. This compact provides legal guidelines and requirements for ensuring that adopted special needs children are provided medical cards when they move into or out of Pennsylvania. The Interstate office works closely with the PA Office of Income Maintenance, the adoptive parents, the local county assistance office and interstate offices from around the country to ensure that the children get their medical assistance in a timely manner.

The Interstate office also ensures that children who are placed into foster care or residential care and are IV-E eligible receive medical cards either in this state or the state in which they are placed.

Child and Family Services Review/Continuous Quality Improvement Unit

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The Federal CFSR monitors states' conformity with the requirements set forth in Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. The CFSR evaluates state performance on outcomes related to safety, permanency, well-being, and certain systemic factors through the use of data analysis, focus groups, case record reviews and interviews with children, youth, families and community stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the review is to improve outcomes for children and families by improving practice. The Child and Family Services Review unit is responsible for oversight and coordination of all components of the review process which include:

- Statewide Self-Assessment
- Onsite Review
- Program Improvement Plan

Pennsylvania's last CFSR onsite review was conducted in 2008. Pennsylvania is scheduled to participate in its next CFSR in 2017.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Continuous Quality Improvement is a process that involves identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and

revising solutions. CQI is not a time limited project or initiative but results in an agency culture that is proactive and supportive of continuous learning. Pennsylvania has committed to implementing a well-developed CQI process statewide through a phased-in approach. The Continuous Quality Improvement Unit is responsible for providing support, consultation, and technical assistance related to CQI efforts within the Office of Children, Youth and Families. The Continuous Quality Improvement Unit works closely with partners at the Child Welfare Resource Center, OCYF Regional Office Staff, county children and youth agencies and other stakeholders. Responsibilities of the CQI unit include:

- Quality Service Reviews (QSR)
- Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model
- OCYF DAPIM
- CQI Sponsor Team
- Sustaining Change Workgroup
- TA Collaborative

Systems Technology and Data Management Section

This section is responsible for the following:

- Application support for OCYF legacy systems, HCSIS Incident Management System, Master Client Index (MCI), business process requirements, user acceptance testing, training, technical assistance, and monitoring contractor work;
- Management of website and portal content for OCYF, disaster recovery/Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP);
- Coordination with Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS) and Bureau of Information Systems (BIS) on application support for Automated Intake/Incident Reporting System (AIIRS);
- Provides assistance with and supports OCYF's statewide system initiative/activities;
- Handles child fatality tracking, IV-E Quality Assurance System, Family Centers Data System, ChildLine System, Interstate Compact Systems, National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), CY28 Reporting System, National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Needs Based Budget System, Adam Walsh System, and Cogent System; and
- Coordination of the Annual Child Abuse Report.

Data Management Unit

This unit is responsible for the data analysis contract with Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (HZA), coordination of data in DHS's data warehouse, and providing training /technical assistance to county children and youth agencies on data reporting. In addition, this unit is responsible for the following data collection/reports for OCYF:

- Federal Reports – Adoption & Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS), NYTD, NCANDS.
- Data for state reports, i.e., Child Abuse Annual Report, CY28 report on children served by county children and youth, management reports, dashboards, program integrity reports, and a variety of ad-hoc reports.
- County children and youth agency needs based budget system and reports.

Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS)

BJJS is responsible for the management, operations, program planning, and oversight of all the Youth Development Center (YDC)/Youth Forestry Camp (YFC) facilities. The youth entrusted to BJJS' care are male and female adolescents who have been adjudicated delinquent by their county judicial system. From the time that a resident is referred to the BJJS, they ensure that every resident receives individualized treatment services based on criminogenic risk, need, and responsivity factors. The BJJS' State Court Liaison Specialists work closely with Pennsylvania's county juvenile court system, the Youth Development Center/Youth Forestry Camp (YDC/YFC) system and private provider agencies to ensure residents are placed in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting.

BJJS has mandated the implementation of the Master Case Planning System (MCPS). Within the framework of Balanced and Restorative Justice principles, this system is designed to accomplish four tasks:

1. To ensure maximum participation on the part of the resident, families, courts, probation officers, and clinical and educational staff in the development of the competency-based continuum of services;
2. To ensure standardization in documentation and the case planning process for all facilities;
3. To provide services that are designed to return the resident to the community better equipped to be a productive member of society; and
4. To ensure that each resident be held accountable to the victim, the community, the court, and family.

Juvenile Justice: Loysville Youth Development Center

Loysville Youth Development Center (LYDC) is a residential facility with a separate secure facility located in Perry County. Within the framework of the Juvenile Court Act, delinquent males from any of the Commonwealth's juvenile courts may be committed to LYDC.

Contact:

Loysville Youth Development Center

Tel: (717) 789-5500

Juvenile Justice: South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit

South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit (SMSTU) is located on the grounds of the South Mountain Restoration Center in Franklin County. SMSTU is a high secure facility that provides treatment programming for adjudicated delinquent males which is designed to meet their individual and diverse needs. The facility is charged with managing and treating more aggressive and behaviorally challenging juveniles who have experienced difficulty adjusting to less secure environments and/or have extensive placement histories.

Contact:

South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit
Tel: (717) 749-7904

Juvenile Justice: Youth Forestry Camp #3

Youth Forestry Camp #3 (YFC #3), located in Huntingdon County, supports positive change through a multi-program approach in a safe and open environment. Three distinct treatment options are available: the B-Dorm Residential program, the First Step program, and the Project Self program. The *B-Dorm Residential* program is an open program designed to emphasize individual strengths while helping the resident prepare for a productive reentry into society. The *First Step* program is a twelve-week program for residents whose delinquent history contains a significant substance or substance subculture component. The *Project Self* program is an intensive eight-week program designed to address a range of needs.

Contact:

Youth Forestry Camp #3
Tel: (814) 658-3492

Juvenile Justice: North Central Secure Treatment Unit

North Central Secure Treatment Unit (NCSTU) provides secure treatment programming for adjudicated delinquent youth. It is located in Montour County and offers a wide range of programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its residents. Included in NCSTU are specific programs that address substance abuse and criminal behavior issues, gender-responsive services for female offenders, programming for residents who have lower cognitive functioning, and treatment for issues related to chronic delinquent behavior and mental health disorders.

Contact:

North Central Secure Treatment Unit
Tel: (570) 271-4700

Juvenile Justice: Youth Forestry Camp #2

Youth Forestry Camp #2 (YFC #2), located in Carbon County, is an open residential facility for adjudicated delinquent males. Residents committed to YFC #2 generally have less extensive and less severe delinquent histories. Residents committed to the facility typically have either violated probation or been adjudicated with one or more drug-related, property-related, and/or minor violent offenses.

Contact:

Youth Forestry Camp #2

Tel: (570) 443- 9524

LAWS, BULLETINS, AND REGULATIONS

Legal Mandates Framework

The laws and regulations that guide our child welfare system begin with the federal government providing the statutory and regulatory framework in regard to the children and families and the child welfare system. Once the federal government passes legislation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families publishes regulation to implement the legislation. As the federal government provides the framework, the Pennsylvania DHS guides the child welfare system within the Commonwealth. When federal legislation is passed, the Pennsylvania DHS analyzes the new legislation to determine what changes need to occur to ensure compliance with the federal law. Changes can be made through enacting or revising legislation, regulation, or bulletins. In addition to changes prompted by newly enacted federal legislation, DHS is continually seeking to improve the child welfare system by constant evaluation and analysis of statute, regulation, procedure, and practice. Below are terms with which to be become familiar:

Law is a series of rules that govern the behavior of people in a society, that allow for resolution of disputes between the members of a society and between individuals and the government, and that provide a means for the state to control the behavior of its citizens.

Statutory law is enacted by the United States Congress or the legislatures of each state and signed into law by the president or state governor.

Administrative law arises from governmental agencies that have rule-making authority delegated to them by Congress or the state legislature. These directives are issued by administrative agencies such as the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Pennsylvania DHS.

Levels of Policy Issued by OCYF

The following is a list of the levels of policy that are issued by the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) and the process implemented by OCYF in developing each level of policy:

Regulation implements the law and has the full force and effect of law. Approval of regulation is a lengthy process which culminates with review by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and Standing Committees of the Legislature and a final review and approval by the Attorney General before the final-form regulation is published in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) with an effective date.

Bulletins establish policy and procedure and provide guidance, which are used, for the most part, until regulations are published as final rulemaking. Bulletins arise from the convening of a workgroup, development of a draft, and review by the workgroup. The

Pennsylvania DHS reviews and approves the Bulletin, which is then reviewed and signed by the Deputy Secretary.

Policy clarifications provide further guidance regarding implementation of statute and regulation. A public or private children and youth agency may request them through their regional office of the Pennsylvania DHS.

Special transmittals are used to disseminate information and provide guidance. The transmittals are vehicles for sharing information, announcing a change in procedures of OCYF, and/or announcing new initiatives. Some of the transmittals may be developed and reviewed by a stakeholder group or an ongoing, standing committee.

Process for Developing Regulations (6 Month to 2 Year Process)

1. The need for regulatory amendment is identified based on statutory amendment and review of current regulation or system evolution.
2. A stakeholder group of affected parties is convened.
3. The draft regulations are developed with the stakeholder group.
4. Executive staff from the Governor's Office and the Pennsylvania DHS, including the Attorney General's Office and Office of General Counsel, review and approve the regulation package.
5. The proposed regulation package is published in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) allowing a minimum 30-day public comment period, including comments from the General Assembly and the [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) (IRRC).
6. OCYF/DHS reviews and responds to each and every public comment and revises the proposed regulation as necessary.
7. Final-form regulation is reviewed by the [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) (IRRC) and Standing Committees of the General Assembly.
8. After a final review and approval by the Attorney General, the Final-Form Regulation is published in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) at www.pabulletin.com with an effective date.

Note: The Pennsylvania Bulletin is Pennsylvania's formal weekly publication that contains promulgated regulations, public notices, and statements of policy.

Process for Developing a Bulletin

1. DHS identifies the need for a bulletin.
2. A stakeholder workgroup is convened to review and discuss the information to be communicated.
3. A draft bulletin is developed.

4. The draft bulletin is reviewed by the stakeholder workgroup for comment and suggested edits.
5. DHS reviews the workgroup's comments and suggested edits, finalizes the draft and approves the bulletin.
6. The bulletin is reviewed and signed by the Deputy Secretary. If the bulletin is being issued by more than one program office (such as by both OCYF and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)), the Deputy Secretaries of both OCYF and OCDEL review and sign the bulletin.

Special Transmittals

1. A vehicle for information sharing, announces a change in OCYF procedure, and/or announces new initiatives.
2. Some transmittals may be developed and reviewed by a stakeholder group or a standing committee such as the Health Care workgroup.

Current Laws, Bulletins, and Regulations

DHS provides access to current laws, bulletins, and regulations on its website www.dhs.pa.gov as well on the OCYF Portal. Currently, each CCYA has several staff registered that can access the OCYF Portal. State laws are also found at www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/public/. State regulations can also be found at www.pacode.com.

New state and federal laws and bulletins are distributed to CCYAs through the OCYF Regional Offices and the DHS/OCYF Listserv, and are also posted on the DHS web site <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/publications/bulletinsearch/index.htm#.VqIR9K32Ykl> and the OCYF Portal.

For bulletins and laws not included in this folder or to obtain updated bulletins and laws, contact your OCYF Regional Office.

Family Finding

[Act 55 of 2013](#), signed into law by Governor Tom Corbett on July 9, 2013, added the requirement that family finding be conducted for a child when the child is accepted for services by the county agency and at least annually thereafter until the child's involvement with the county agency is terminated or family finding is discontinued under circumstances permitted as described within the law. Family finding is defined within Act 55 as the "ongoing diligent efforts between a county agency or its contracted providers, and relatives and kin to:

- 1.) Search for and identify adult relatives and kin and engage them in children and youth social service planning and delivery.
- 2.) Gain commitment from relatives and kin to support a child or parent receiving children and youth social services."

Child Fatality and Near Fatality Bulletin

[Bulletin number 3490-15-01](#) regarding implementation of child fatality and near fatality review and report protocols as required by Act 33 of 2008 and Act 44 of 2014, was issued on July 15, 2015. The purpose of this bulletin is to transmit to public and private children and youth agencies the revised child fatality and near fatality review and reporting protocols in accordance with 23 Pa. C.S., Chapter 63 (relating to the Child Protective Services Law) (CPSL). This bulletin will rescind and replace Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Bulletin # 3490-00-01, entitled "Child Death Review and Report Protocols," which was issued on January 1, 2001.

On July 3, 2008, Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law. This amendment to the CPSL, known as Act 33 of 2008, was effective December 30, 2008. Act 33 of 2008 requires that child fatalities and near fatalities where abuse is suspected be reviewed at both the state and county levels. The review of child fatalities was not new to the field of child welfare and OCYF previously set forth requirements for similar reviews through Bulletin # 3490-00-01. Act 33 of 2008 codified and built upon this review process to include the review of near fatalities, and Act 44 of 2014 further addressed public disclosure provisions.

Acts 33 of 2008 and 44 of 2014 recognize the importance of inter-disciplinary reviews of fatalities and near fatalities. This bulletin explains in detail the type of cases that must be reviewed and the framework for review completion and includes a data collection form that will provide greater assistance in analysis of trends. The revised data collection form was designed to capture more in-depth information regarding the circumstances of the fatalities and near fatalities, the dynamics of the family and (alleged) perpetrator, and the details regarding public, private, and community services provided to the family and (alleged) perpetrator. In addition, Act 33 of 2008 and Act 44 of 2014 increase child-serving systems' transparency and accountability related to child fatalities and near fatalities by granting public access to information related to each child fatality or near fatality when abuse is suspected.

By completing detailed reviews of child fatalities and near fatalities and conducting an analysis of related trends, we are better able to ascertain the strengths and challenges of public, private and community services and to identify solutions to address the service needs of the children and families served within, but also beyond, the child welfare system.

FEDERAL

Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs)

In order to receive federal funding under title IV-B of the Social Security Act, a state or tribal agency requesting title IV-B funds must submit a five-year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). The CFSP is a strategic plan that sets forth a state or tribe's vision and goals to strengthen its child welfare system. It outlines initiatives and activities that the state or tribe will carry out over the next five years to administer and integrate programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. The Annual Progress and Services Report (APSRs) provide an annual update on the progress made by states or tribes toward the goals and objectives in their CFSPs. Also, the APSR outlines the planned activities for the upcoming fiscal year. The current CFSP covers federal fiscal years 2015-2019, with APSRs due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Children's Bureau (CB) in June of each year.

There are a number of programs covered under the CFSP, including the following:

- Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services program (Title IV-B, Subpart 1, Child Welfare Services)
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families (Title IV-B, Subpart 2)
- Monthly Caseworker Visits (Funds)
- Training Activities and Costs to be Funded Through Titles IV-B and IV-E
- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Chafee Foster Care Independence (CFCIP) and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) programs

Under federal requirements, states must conduct meaningful engagement of internal and external stakeholders in the development of the CFSP and subsequent APSRs. County administrators should be aware that they and their staff may be invited to be a part of the statewide planning efforts for submission of the CFSP and APSRs.

PA's 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan is available online through the Department of Human Services [website](#).

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

History

The 1994 Amendments to the Social Security Act (SSA) authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review state child and family service programs to ensure conformity with the requirements in titles IV-B and IV-E of the SSA. Traditionally, reviews focused primarily on assessing state agencies' compliance with procedural requirements, as evidenced by case file documentation. In

addition, past reviews did not provide states with opportunities for making improvements before imposing penalties.

Purpose

The Child and Family Services Reviews are a federal-state collaborative effort designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through state child welfare systems. The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has administered the reviews since 2000. These reviews examine state child welfare programs and practice to identify strengths and challenges in state programs and systems, focusing on outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The reviews work in tandem with other state and federal frameworks for system planning, reform, and effective implementation, such as the Child and Family Services Plan and a well-functioning continuous quality improvement system.

Outcomes and Systemic Factors

In both phases of the Child and Family Services Reviews, the states are assessed regarding seven expected outcomes for children and families and seven state plan requirements-based systemic factors that affect child outcomes. For a detailed list of the items assessed under the outcomes and systemic factors, see the Child and Family Services Reviews Quick Reference Items List at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cfsrquickreferencelist.pdf>.

Assessment of Outcomes

Under three domains of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being, states are assessed for the following seven outcomes:

- Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.
- Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
- Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

For Safety Outcome 2, Permanency Outcome 2, and the three Well-Being outcomes, the qualitative information about the items related to each outcome collected through

the onsite case reviews is used to determine substantial conformity (the percentage of cases reviewed in which the outcomes were determined to be substantially achieved). Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1 are rated using the state's performance on statewide data indicators for which national standards have been established, in addition to the qualitative information referenced above.

Statewide Data Indicators

Statewide data indicators are aggregate measures calculated using information that states report to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). National standards have been established for each statewide data indicator. By measuring state performance against national standards on statewide data indicators, the Children's Bureau can assist states in continuously monitoring their performance on child outcomes and better understand the entirety of their child welfare systems. There are two statewide data indicators used to determine substantial conformity with safety and five related to permanency and placement stability.

Assessment of Systemic Factors

The systemic factors refer to seven systems operating within a state that have the capacity, if well-functioning, to promote child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The systemic factors, comprising title IV-B and IV-E plan requirements are:

- Statewide information system
- Case review system
- Quality assurance system
- Staff and provider training
- Service array and resource development
- Agency responsiveness to the community
- Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention

The Children's Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the seven systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The information used to inform systemic factor ratings comes from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews, as necessary.

Structure of the Reviews

The Child and Family Services Reviews are a partnership between federal and state staff and involve a two-phase process: (1) a statewide assessment, and (2) an onsite review as required by 45 CFR § 1355.33. If needed, a state will develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to improve upon areas identified as not in substantial conformity.

- In the first phase, the staff of the state child welfare agency, representatives selected by the agency who were consulted in the development of the Child and Family Services Plan, and other individuals deemed appropriate and agreed upon by the state and the Children’s Bureau, complete a statewide assessment using statewide data indicators to evaluate the programs under review and examine the outcomes and systemic factors subject to review.
- The second phase of the review process is an onsite review. The onsite review includes case reviews, case-related interviews to determine outcome performance and, as necessary, stakeholder interviews to further inform the assessment of systemic factors.
 - There are two possible paths to the case reviews conducted during the onsite review: (1) the “Traditional Review,” a one-week onsite review during which a federal and state team reviews a sample of cases at three sites and conducts case-related and stakeholder interviews; or (2) the “State Conducted Case Review,” which must be approved by the Children’s Bureau and consists of case reviews within the context of the state’s ongoing case review process during a defined six-month period.

A state determined not to be in substantial conformity with one or more of the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors under review must develop a Program Improvement Plan jointly with the Children’s Bureau that addresses identified areas of nonconformity. The state then implements the approved Program Improvement Plan, seeking technical assistance as needed. The Children’s Bureau and the state monitor the plan’s implementation and the state’s progress toward plan-specified goals. If the state is unable to demonstrate the agreed-upon improvement, the Administration for Children and Families must take a financial penalty from a portion of the state’s title IV-B and IV-E federal child welfare funds.

STATE/REGIONAL

Best Practice

Pennsylvania has strived to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children by providing guidance and resources. Pennsylvania continues to work toward evidenced-based practice through the Needs-Based Plan and Budget process.

To assist Pennsylvania in understanding how to identify and implement evidence-based practices, OCYF has received consultation from the [Child Welfare League of America](#) (CWLA). The following information has been provided by the CWLA to assist you in identifying and implementing evidence-based practices for your CCYA.

Distinguishing Evidence-Based Practices from Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based *practices* are broadly defined simply as practices having some level of empirical support for their effectiveness. That is, the practices have been tested and considered effective based on an objective standard. The term is used in the medical field where research designs are typically quite rigorous and involve a number of replications. Rigorous research designs are more likely to rule out explanations for effects other than the variable that is being tested.

Research in child welfare and human services settings do not typically approach the standard achieved in medical research. While increasingly better designs in child welfare occur today, much of the research in the social work field leaves many questions unanswered. Child welfare research is typically “correlation research” which informs practitioners about the degree and way in which factors are associated with one another. While these findings cannot inform practitioners whether certain factors or activities cause a particular outcome, they do provide important information to guide both practice and further research.

Evidence-based *practice*, as a way of approaching work in child welfare, implies more, however, than just using *practices* having some demonstrated effectiveness. It includes posing thoughtful questions about the needs of service recipients, involving them in the planning of interventions and monitoring of progress, conducting ongoing evaluation, revising practices as indicated by evaluation, and adding to the knowledge base. Resources for more information and clarification regarding Evidence-Based Practice include the following:

[The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare](#) (CEBC) provides up-to-date information on evidence-based child welfare practices.

Promising Practices/Programs

“Promising” in relation to evidence-based practices, is the term often applied to practices or program models that appear to have positive effects but for which research

is preliminary. Findings usually rest on only one or a few studies that used a weak design, a small sample size, or had other limitations. Positive findings from such studies provide a basis for using a practice while continuing to test it to better understand whether, with whom, and under what conditions it is effective.

Some research centers have developed specific criteria for practices and programs that they consider “promising” to distinguish them from those that are better defined and more rigorously tested. Two examples of criteria for making this distinction may be found on [RAND Corporation’s Promising Practices Network](#) website and on the [Blueprints for Violence Prevention website](#).

Blueprint Practices/Programs

The term Blueprint, as applied to human services practice models, refers to programs that have been found to be effective based on very rigorous research criteria including random assignment to treatment and control groups, large sample sizes, strict adherence to program design, and replication.

The term is drawn from the Blueprints for Violence Prevention project at the University of Colorado’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency was one of the original supporters of this project, which was later funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The project identified violence prevention programs having very strong empirical support of their effectiveness. The eleven programs that have been selected as models are called *Blueprints*. The term *promising* is applied to other reviewed programs that appear to be effective, but do not meet these more stringent research criteria.

More about the Blueprints project, the model and promising programs it has identified may be learned by visiting the website at <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/>.

Budgeting and Fiscal

Funding Your CCYA

CCYA funding comes from a complicated combination of federal, state, and local tax dollars. The expenses of the CCYA are paid for by the county then reimbursed by the federal and state governments, assuming the expense is eligible for federal and state reimbursement, once a net expense has been established. Expenses for services provided to alleged or delinquent youth are also reimbursed through the CCYAs budget. The net expense is calculated by applying program income against the overall expenses. Program incomes includes, but is not limited to, child support payments paid by the parents of those children placed outside of the home (if the Court determines that the parents are able to pay a share of the placement costs), social security benefits (Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability or Survivors Benefits), Veteran’s benefits received on behalf of a child in out-of-home care, donations to the

agency, fees paid to the agency, and interest. Once a net expense has been determined, the CCYA first requests federal reimbursements based on the types of expenses and eligibility of the child for certain federal programs. Once all federal funding opportunities have been exhausted, the remaining expenses are reimbursed using a combination of state and local dollars. The state share of allowable costs are established in §3140.22 of the Title 55 PA Code. For example, for every dollar spent by the CCYA child protective services, after other funding sources are used, the state will reimburse the CCYA eighty cents of every net county dollar, if the services delivered comply with applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

Budgeting

The budget for CCYAs is developed through the Needs-Based Plan and Budget Process (NBPB). This process allows CCYAs to request federal and state funding to support their child welfare programs. The process integrates the analysis of service trends and outcomes with planning and budgeting in each county. CCYA and Juvenile Probation Offices (JPO) must analyze their Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and other data, identify program trends and relevant reasons for those trends, propose program changes, and submit a budget request that includes relevant justification for any increases or new expenditures.

The NBPB process covers three fiscal years: the fiscal year that is ending (“actual year”), the fiscal year currently being implemented (“implementation year”), and the fiscal year being planned (“NBPB year”). Fiscal years run July 1 through June 30. Instructions to complete the NBPB process for the “implementation” year and “NBPB” year are released in the spring of each year. Each CCYA/JPO evaluates the costs incurred in the “actual” year while simultaneously revising their “implementation” year budget (which was submitted to the state the previous August). Revisions are based on changing service needs. The CCYA also considers the changing service needs and expenditures as they plan for the “NBPB” year. The NBPB process results in the development of a plan for the CCYA/JPO that proposes the services to be delivered and the funds needed to provide services and to improve outcomes for children and families in the county. This plan is submitted to the state for approval in August of each year. For example, the NBPB for FY 2016/17 was submitted in August of 2015. Information within the request supported expenses incurred in FY 2014/15 (Actual Year) and plans being implemented in FY 2015/16 (Implementation Year).

NBPB requests are analyzed by OCYF’s regional offices, central office staff, OCYF bureau directors, and OCYF’s Deputy Secretary.

After OCYF certifies an amount that they determine is the CCYA’s justified need, the aggregate amounts of all certified CCYA budgets are forwarded to the governor and to the legislature as they put together the statewide budget packages. The state’s tentative budget is typically shared publicly in February. Tentative allocation letters are distributed to each CCYA based on the state’s tentative budget. Once the final budget is signed, by July 1, new allocation letters are given to the CCYAs and their service and spending

plans are modified accordingly. The agencies have the right to appeal the certified amounts determined by OCYF and revenue allocations determined through the NBPB process and the Governor's final budget.

The following chart is designed to assist you in understanding the multiple tasks taking place each month with regard to the yearly fiscal planning.

Month	State Budget Cycle
January	Beginning of 3 rd Quarter for the current fiscal year.
February	Governor presents upcoming fiscal year budget to Legislatures, including the CCYAs certified services and recommended allocations from OCYF's review of the CCYAs NBPB submission from the previous August. These certified services and recommended allocations are provided to the CCYAs in a tentative allocation letter for the coming fiscal year starting July 1 st .
March	
April	Beginning of 4 th Quarter current fiscal year, CCYAs begin formal planning of changes to plan and budget to be implemented July 1 and forecasting needs for the following fiscal year being planned. OCYF issues draft plan and budget guidelines to counties for the following year.
May	OCYF issues final plan and budget guidelines to counties for the following year. Planning continues.
June	Planning continues for Implementation Year starting July 1 st and the year starting in 13 months. Legislature approves the state budget effective next month.
July	Beginning of new fiscal year, July 1 st . Final allocations for fiscal year beginning July 1 received from OCYF.
August	CCYAs submit final invoices and amended budgets for the previous fiscal year ended June 30. CCYAs submit NBPB request for fiscal year beginning in 11 months, next July 1.
September	CCYAs continue to provide supporting information and justifications to support their NBPB request.
October	Beginning of 2 nd quarter of current fiscal year, make modifications as needed.
November	OCYF finalizes aggregate certified need and recommendations for revenue allocations for CCYAs for integration into Department of Human Services (DHS) budget.
December	DHS forwards budget amounts for fiscal year being planned to Governor's Budget Office for integration into State budget.

Safety Efforts

Safety Assessment and Management Process

The Pennsylvania Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP) was developed in collaboration with the Action for Child Protection, Inc., National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS). The process will help move Pennsylvania beyond incident-focused investigations, require greater engagement of all family members, and guide assessment of safety threats and caregiver protective capacities to improve safety planning. This process is grounded in our child welfare values and principles. With the implementation of this new process comes a paradigm shift in safety assessment practice. Some of these paradigm shifts include: a shift from allegation-based investigation/assessment to an information-based, analytical approach; a shift from compliance-based Family Services Plans to change-based, individualized, behavioral-specific plans; and understanding that safety is the responsibility of all staff regardless of their role and function within an agency – that is, safety concepts and practice provide the focus for all interventions.

The purpose of SAMP is to assure that children are protected from harm. Safety assessments, conducted by child welfare professionals, are completed throughout the entire case process beginning with Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or General Protective Services (GPS) investigations/assessments through to case closure. The primary purpose of this process is to ensure that caregivers have the necessary Protective Capacities to protect the children in their care. The implementation of SAMP has been divided into four phases: In-Home Safety Assessments, Out-of-Home Safety Assessments, Congregate Care Assessments, and Older Youth Assessments.

In-Home Safety Assessments are currently completed at every contact in conjunction with other assessments, including Risk Assessments. While Risk Assessments focus on the likelihood (chance, potential, or prospect) of future child maltreatment, In-Home Safety Assessments focus on threats that are occurring now or in the near future. When conducting an In-Home Safety Assessment, child welfare professionals gather information to determine whether or not there are active Present or Impending Danger Safety Threats. Information that is gathered to inform safety threat identification is centralized around six assessment domains: Type of Maltreatment; Nature of Maltreatment – Surrounding Circumstances: Child Functioning, Adult Functioning, General Parenting, and Parenting Discipline. Once threats are identified, child welfare professionals determine what Protective Capacities, which are currently either diminished or absent, need to be enhanced through services (detailed on the Family Service Plan) in order to mitigate the identified Safety Threats. Child welfare professionals then analyze the existing Safety Threats and Protective Capacities to determine the level of intervention needed to control the Safety Threats and to inform the safety decision. There are three safety decisions associated with the In-Home Safety Assessment: Safe, Safe with a Comprehensive Safety Plan, and Unsafe. The latter two decisions require the development of a Safety Plan inclusive of specific interventions that are available and immediately accessible to control identified threats.

Once a Safety Plan is developed, it is necessary to continue to monitor the plan for its effectiveness. When a child is determined to be unsafe in their own home, child welfare professionals are required to petition the court for custody and placement in an out-of-home setting.

The Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessment and Management Process was developed by the Out-of-Home Care Committee, a partnership between county caseworkers and supervisors, staff from OCYF and the Resource Center, private provider representatives, and Action for Child Protection, Inc. NRCCPS. The process was piloted. After pilot revisions were made, county staff were trained on the process. However, at this time, the implementation of the Out-of-Home Care Safety and Assessment Management Process has been extended to allow OCYF, PCYA, and other stakeholders the opportunity to assure the process best meets the needs of counties to assure the safety of children and youth in out-of-home care.

Even though a child is placed in an out-of-home setting, it is still necessary for child welfare professionals to complete In-Home Safety Assessments. These are completed as if the child was in the home to determine if the conditions that caused the Safety Threats are still active or if enough change has occurred (e.g. enhanced Protective Capacities) to eliminate the Safety Threat or to allow for an in-home Safety Plan. SAMP reinforces the practice of planned reunification. This practice includes engaging the in-home caregivers to understand what needs to happen to have their children returned home and then to identify supports and/or safety actions that could be put in place to help caregiver's and children once they are returned home. Emphasis on planned reunification should lower the number of children who re-enter care since the underlying causes of the Safety Threats have been addressed.

The final two phases of the implementation of SAMP relate to assessing children and youth in congregate care settings and assessing the safety of older youth. Prior to implementation of these types of assessments, consultation from Action for Child Protection, Inc. NRCCPS and the NRC for Youth Development will take place to determine the best methods for conducting these types of assessments. It is logical that the framework identified in both the In-Home and Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessments (information gathering, assessment, analysis, decision-making and planning) will also apply to congregate care and older youth safety assessments, but during PIP implementation, the strategies pertaining to assessment of children/youth in congregate care and assessment of safety for older youth will include technical assistance consultation to gather recommendations.

Each phase of SAMP is reliant on good social work practice and is congruent with family-centered and strength-based, solution-focused practice. Child welfare professionals need to be able to engage family members and supports, and other systems and community partners. Supervisors play a vital role in SAMP, as they play a critical role in ensuring that enough information is gathered, regardless of the type of assessment, to make informed decisions about child safety, the need for placement, and to determine if a child can be reunified. Supervisors also play a vital role in ensuring

that the necessary protective capacities and any moderate or high risk factors are addressed in the Family Service Plan and/or Child's Permanency Plan. This oversight works to guide reunification efforts and other casework decisions. In addition, the supervisor helps to clarify for the worker the policies, procedures, and related intervals provided by OCYF for each component of SAMP. Supervisory support sessions will be held regionally to support supervisors and their workers in the implementation of SAMP, including technical assistance surrounding practice examples shared by supervisors. In conclusion, it is important to reiterate that PA's SAMP will have a direct correlation to improving our safety outcomes; furthermore, it is believed that SAMP will impact Well-being outcomes as well, as this practice includes the utilization of engagement strategies, enhanced assessments that focus on reported allegations as well as underlying issues, the caregiver's protective capacities and the safety analysis which leads to a safety decision and ultimately connects to effective service planning and appropriate service interventions to mitigate safety threats.

Due to the implementation of the new SAMP, Pennsylvania plans to conduct further research and evaluation to examine the relationship between the current Risk Assessment and the SAMP. We are committed to doing an independent review of the application of SAMP to identify strengths, as well as any gaps in the practice of assessing the child's safety (including the information gathering, assessment, analysis, decision making, and/or planning) so that Pennsylvania can strengthen the quality of the Safety Assessment and Management Process. This independent review may take a closer look at the Risk Assessment process and examine how to best continue to assess risk in conjunction with the Safety Assessment and Management Process.

GPS Response Times

OCYF convened a workgroup of county agency and OCYF staff to develop a statewide policy related to response times for general protective service cases. The workgroup convened on July 19, 2011 and worked diligently to develop the statewide policy contained in OCYF Bulletin 3490-12-01 entitled Statewide General Protective Services (GPS) Response Times. This OCYF Bulletin was issued in April 2012. The purpose of this bulletin is to establish a statewide policy regarding response times for reports made to county agencies that are designated as General Protective Services (GPS) reports.

The development of these response times came from the 2008 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) due to the timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment being identified as an area needing improvement within Pennsylvania. Please note that the effective date of the bulletin and full implementation of the response times is **July 1, 2012**.

The Child Welfare Resource Center, with the assistance of the GPS Response Times Workgroup, created a web-based training for county staff to take in order to begin implementation of the intervals July 1, 2012.

Permanency Efforts

American Bar Association's (ABA) PA Barriers to Permanency Project

In 2003, Pennsylvania contracted with the ABA to conduct the Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Project (Project) based on the highly successful New York model. This project undertakes five major tasks in the counties:

1. Identifying and analyzing delays - Through case reviews and interviews with stakeholders, the Project identifies and examines each step in the life of a case and analyzes possible causes for delay.
2. Interactively developing recommendations and implementing reforms - Once problems are identified, a local multidisciplinary advisory board meets regularly to examine the delays and propose potential reforms. Project staff design action plans and help the CCYA start making recommended changes. Everyone in the system must work together to get changes and reforms accepted in the field.
3. Establishing written protocols, procedures, and providing multidisciplinary training - These typically include topics such as:
 - Identifying, locating, and providing outreach to missing parents and relatives;
 - Addressing increases in adolescent population;
 - Preparing written procedures;
 - Front-loading services;
 - Implementing concurrent planning; and
 - Decreasing delays in court procedures.
4. Monitoring reforms and changes - Change is difficult for large systems. Making sure that proposed reforms are actually implemented is crucial. Project staff works with counties to ensure progress and address any resistance.
5. Sharing Project results - The Project helps develop an informal county network to share common challenges, solutions, and other actions throughout the state. Sharing results by telling advocates, affiliated professionals, and the larger community what the Project is doing is another key component of success.

This award-winning Project helps children move through the foster care system into permanency and helps states save foster care dollars. Children in foster care need permanency quickly and safely. Children deserve to go home when it's safe -- but if they can't, then they must be provided with the most permanent home that meets their needs. The ABA Permanency Barriers Project is helping states do this for their children. In New York and Pennsylvania, the Project cut about 12 months from a child's stay in foster care and saved over \$18 million dollars.

The county's juvenile court judge, child welfare administrator, and child welfare agency solicitor must all agree to participate in the Project. An ABA attorney will be assigned to work with the CCYA and will visit on a monthly basis for a two-year period.

Counties interested in learning more about the Barriers to Permanency Project can contact Anne Marie Lancour at 202-662-1756 or AnneMarie.Lancour@americanbar.org.

Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Court's (AOPC) Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) Permanency Practice Initiative

The Pennsylvania Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI) began with the implementation of Phase One in March 2009. Components of the PPI, which are strategies meant to improve timely permanence and reduce trauma, include: Three month court reviews, Children's Roundtables (convened by the lead dependency judge and co-convened by the agency administrator), Common Pleas Case Management System Dependency Module (CPCMS), quarterly data collection reporting, Grief & Loss Training, Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, and a practice for training providers and the community in strengths-based practice and philosophy). PPI county staff, including the dependency court judge and child welfare administrator, is required to receive training in all practice areas of the initiative to better understand and in so doing, better lead local reform.

- Phase One counties include: Allegheny, Blair, Butler, Carbon, Chester, Dauphin, Jefferson, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Northampton, Snyder, Tioga, Venango, Washington, and York.
- Phase Two counties include: Forest, Warren, Armstrong, Cumberland, Adams, Indiana, Franklin, Fulton, Tioga, Bucks, Luzerne, and Montgomery.
- Phase Three counties include: Philadelphia, Beaver, Fayette, Union, and Lycoming.
- Phase Four counties include: Columbia, Monroe, Montour, and Westmoreland.
- Phase Five county: Lancaster

Family Finding

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (in conjunction with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) and OCYF) developed a training series based largely on the Family Finding training delivered by the creator of the [Family Finding Model](#): Kevin Campbell (Seneca Center). The full Family Finding curriculum is 24 hours in length and is comprised of four separate parts described in the next paragraph.

Although days one and two are offered as one curriculum, it is truly comprised of two separate parts. Day one is an overview of Pennsylvania's interpretation of Kevin Campbell's Family Finding model. Day two reveals information and practice associated

with steps one and two of the Family Finding Model, respectively, Discovery and Engagement. Day three offers information and consultation associated with step three of the model, Planning. Day four offers information and consultation associated with step four of the model, Decision Making. Day five offers information and consultation associated with step five of the model, Evaluation. Finally, day six offers information and consultation associated with step six of the model, Follow up on Supports. The full Family Finding curriculum is available by clicking [here](#).

OCYF, as well as AOPC [Through its Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI)] continue to support the implementation of [Family Finding](#) to locate kin/non-kin resources for children and youth.

Concurrent Planning

Concurrent planning is the process of working towards one legal permanency goal (typically reunification), while at the same time establishing and implementing an alternative permanency goal and plan that are worked on concurrently to move children/youth more quickly to a safe and stable permanent family. (Permanency Roundtable Project, 2010) This process involves concurrent rather than sequential permanency planning efforts. It involves a mix of meaningful family engagement, targeted case practice, and legal strategies aimed at achieving timely permanency, while at the same time establishing and actively working a concurrent permanency plan in case the primary goal cannot be accomplished in a timely manner. It is not a fast track to adoption but to permanency (<http://www.nrcpfc.org/cpt/overview.htm>).

OCYF issued a Concurrent Planning bulletin in May 2012 that outlines the implementation guidance and the eight core components of concurrent planning. Concurrent Planning for all children entering out of home care is now required.

The Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network

The Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network ([SWAN](#)) is a unique model of public-private collaboration whose role is to address barriers to permanency for all Pennsylvania foster children. SWAN involves state, county, and private agencies to coordinate the delivery of permanency-related services for children and post-permanency services to families via a state contract administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. SWAN services are allocated separately from a county's operating budget along with support from paralegals requested by the county to support county caseworkers through legal steps and preparation for ongoing case reviews/hearings. The current SWAN Prime contractor is Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership with Family Design Resources.

Using their SWAN budget, county workers make referrals for family profiles, child profiles, child preparation, child specific recruitment, placement and finalization services for their children and families on their caseload. The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange

is also a service of SWAN. Counties depend on the exchange to list and promote permanency for the children and youth with goals of adoption.

SWAN RTAs also coordinate and provide training for county implementation of the *Casey Family Permanency Roundtable (PRT) project*. PRTs are structured case consultations bring together caseworkers, casework supervisors, and experts from inside and outside the organization to deeply scrutinize a case and brainstorm ideas for achieving permanency for a child/youth. Counties are encouraged to request this service which when used in addition to SWAN services is proving to assure even stronger permanency outcomes.

County staff are invited to quarterly meetings and conferences organized by the SWAN Prime Contract to learn about the most recent trends in permanency services, independent living services and child welfare practice. Most meetings are held at no cost for county staff.

Well-Being Efforts

Quality Visitation

The Child & Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (CFSIA) addressed findings from the first round of CFSRs. Data collected demonstrated “a strong correlation between frequent caseworker visits with children and positive outcomes for these children, such as timely adherence to permanency and other indicators of child well-being.” To support monthly caseworker visits with every child in foster care, 55 million federal dollars were authorized to be spent during 2007-2012. Funding is to be targeted toward caseworker retention and recruitment issues, as well as access to mobile technology.

Pennsylvania used a portion of this funding to develop a field guide for caseworkers to use when conducting monthly visits with children in foster care settings. The concept of the *Field Guide for the Practice of Quality Visitation with Children and Families* originated from recommendations made by a workgroup of key stakeholders, including youth and public and private child welfare workers and supervisors. The intent is to ingrain the practice of quality visitation into all aspects of child welfare practice, including children in foster care. The field guide will be rolled out in conjunction with the Out-of-Home Safety Assessment. [Click here](#) for more detailed information on the *Field Guide for the Practice of Quality Visitation with Children and Families*.

The funding was also used to increase caseworker’s access to mobile technology. The Office of Children Youth and Families (OCYF) partnered with the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Social Work, Child Welfare Research and Education Programs to conduct research on the use of technology.

The research study entitled “Use of Mobile Technology in Caseworker Visits to Children in Federally Defined Foster Care” began in 2009 and is designed to examine two different questions:

- What are the current visitation practices in Pennsylvania?
- Does the use of technology in the field impact caseworker visitation practices related to engagement, job satisfaction, and a sense of professionalism?

Four hundred computer tablets were distributed to thirty-two counties across the Commonwealth. Training was conducted on use of the tablets and engagement strategies. In 2011, additional technology is being purchased including: speech recognition upgrades, tablets, headsets, and mobile printers. Pennsylvania will continue efforts to improve the quality and frequency of visitation in 2012, which is the last year of federal funding.

Educational Screening Tool

The 2008 CFRS conducted in Pennsylvania revealed that while Pennsylvania did well in assessing children’s educational needs, an area that needed improvement was assuring that appropriate services were provided or arranged. As a result, Pennsylvania developed a screening instrument that not only assists child welfare professionals in assessing whether the educational needs of children actively involved in child welfare system are being met, but also offers guidance to assist child welfare professionals in their efforts to ensure that appropriate services are provided or arranged. The Educational Screening Tool has been revised to streamline the areas to be addressed, as well as being written in strength-based language. The accompanying Manual is also being revised and once finalized, will be rolled out within counties. Final decisions regarding rollout and implementation are pending.

Psychotropic Medication Usage and Monitoring

On September 30, 2011, President Obama signed The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act into law. The act included additional statutory provisions intended to lead to improved outcomes for children and families. Many of these provisions focused on child well-being, including new requirements that states establish protocols for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications prescribed to children in out of home care. In 2013, the Department of Human Services (DHS) established a Health Care Workgroup to improve health care outcomes for children in out-of-home placement. The Psychotropic Medication Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the Health Care Workgroup whose focus is appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medication for children in foster care

Members of this subcommittee include representatives from the following agencies and stakeholder groups:

- Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP)
- Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)
- Office of Income Maintenance (OIM); and the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)
- Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)
- Physical health managed care organizations (PH-MCOs)
- Behavioral health managed care organizations (BH-MCOs)
- CHOP PolicyLab
- Casey Family Programs
- Youth
- Private child welfare providers
- Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
- Advocates
- County child welfare agencies (CCYA)

DHS commissioned Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) PolicyLab to conduct a study of psychotropic medication use for children in Pennsylvania’s foster care system. [CHOP PolicyLab prepared a summary brief](#) that was released to stakeholders April 22, 2015 by the Department of Human Services.

The recommendations include suggestions for a comprehensive assessment and trauma specific screening tool. It also provided guidance to DHS on a recommended informed consent document to be used for children in foster care for when psychotropic medications are prescribed. There is also a recommendation for mental health consultation services and training for safe and effective use of psychotropic medications. The subcommittee also recommends that DHS require the PH-MCO’s to adopt Medicaid Fee-For-Service’s (FFS) prior authorization guidelines, which prompt a clinical review of a child’s medical care, prior to authorizing psychotropic medications. Recommendations were also made to DHS to implement oversight and data collection to capture changes in health outcomes related to psychotropic medication use.

DHS is working with the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to update the “Pennsylvania Enhancing Assessments Toolkit” and encourage the use of trauma screening tools. DHS is also working with the subcommittee to develop informed consent documents for CCYA to use to educate children, youth and families about their right to consent when psychotropic medication is prescribed. In addition, DHS is working with the Child Welfare Resource Center to develop caseworker, birth, kinship, and resource parent training regarding trauma informed tools, informed consent, and effective use of psychotropic medications

DHS also accepted the recommendation regarding mental health consultation services and other training related to the safe and effective use of psychotropic medications. The Department worked with system partners to pilot a telephonic consultative service. Vendors are being selected for each Health Care region. It is anticipated the pilot program will begin in April 2016. DHS also collaborated with the Pennsylvania (PA) Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and PA’s Psychiatric Society to

issue best practice guidelines on the effective use of psychotropic medications to Primary Care Physicians (PCP) and psychiatrist.

DHS also accepted the recommendation for PH-MCO's to adopt FFS's prior authorization guidelines. DHS collaborated with the PH-MCO's to develop and implement prior authorization policies and procedures for antipsychotic medication use that aligns with the FFS model. The PH-MCO's implemented the new prior authorization guidelines in January 2016.

DHS also created a Psychotropic Medication Dashboard Report (PMDR) to monitor the use of psychotropic medication and to improve coordination of care for children and youth on anti-psychotic medications or multiple psychotropic medications. The PMDR report was created from claims data and identifies children and youth in out of home placement who are Medical Assistance (MA) eligible and are being prescribed psychotropic medication(s). The report also identifies key elements of care that may impact a child or youth's well-being while taking psychotropic medications and utilizes a "red flag" alert to identify areas of concern. The PMDR was sent to the PH and BH MCOs in January 2016 for review and comment. The second round of the PMDR will be sent to eight pilots CCYA's once user agreements are in place. This report should be used as a tool to track and monitor psychotropic medication use for children and youth in out-of-home placement. The goal is to provide the CCYA caseworker with questions to ask the child or youth's Primary Care Physician (PCP) and to encourage the caseworker to connect with the PH MCO special needs unit (SNU) for assistance with care coordination. This connection with the PCP and the SNUs will strengthen these working relationships, improve communication and care coordination of psychotropic medications, and ultimately enhance the well-being of children and youth in foster care.

The Health Care Workgroup Sponsor Team continues to work with DHS and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations made by CHOP and the Psychotropic Medication Subcommittee.

Systemic Factors Efforts

Statewide Information System

Federal regulations (45 CFR 1355.34(c)(1)) require state title IV-E agencies to have an information system that is operating statewide and, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months has been) in foster care. Pennsylvania is currently engaged in the development and implementation of a Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) that will help the state meet these federal requirements.

Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS)

CWIS is an automated solution to support the exchange of information between the

eight child welfare case management systems (utilized by 67 County Children and Youth Agencies) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). The project is being led by OCYF Program Management and DHS Bureau of Information Systems (BIS). OCYF Regional Offices, ChildLine, and County Children and Youth Agencies are involved with the project to provide subject area expertise. KPMG LLP and Deloitte Consulting LLP are providing consulting services on CWIS.

DHS's goal is to develop a solution that follows a model based on daily county operations being supported by their own case management systems and state operations being supported by its own system. The benefits of CWIS are:

- Timely exchange of information to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of Pennsylvania's children and families;
- Automation of the exchange of information between county systems and state systems;
- Integration of county level case management systems with state systems and services;
- Efficiencies in processes and reporting;
- Fiscal and program accountability; and
- Compliance with federal and state reporting requirements.

Implementation of CWIS will occur using a phased in approach. The implementation of Phase I of CWIS occurred on December 26, 2014.

Phase I – Referrals

This phase focuses on referrals and investigation/assessment outcomes functions and expands statewide access to CPS and GPS reports. Phase I includes self-service functionality for mandated reporting and child abuse history clearances.

Phase II – Children

Phase II builds functionality to provide a complete view of a child's case management data. This phase improves the accuracy and timeliness of data to evaluate performance and outcomes in terms of child and family characteristics, service type, and outcomes.

Phase III – Provider

This phase focuses on providers and builds functionality to provide a complete view of provider data. Phase III provides a statewide view of providers and resources for reporting and performance tracking.

Phase IV – Accounting

The final phase focuses on accounting and builds functionality to provide county and state financial expenditures and plans.

The OCYF Portal contains CWIS project artifacts and resources. The portal can be accessed at

www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/ocyf_portal/19280

County access to the OCYF portal can be requested via email from RA-pwocfacctrequest@pa.gov.

Quality Assurance

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Memorandum

Federal regulations require states to have a quality assurance (QA) system in place to routinely assess the quality of services covered under the state's Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP) and to assure that there will be measures to address identified problems. In addition, title IV-E requires agencies to monitor and conduct periodic evaluations of activities conducted under the title IV-E program and to implement standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of such children. In Informational Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-12-07, released in 2012, the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) encouraged states to enhance their QA systems through a continuous quality improvement (CQI) approach.

Casey Family Programs and the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement define continuous quality improvement as: the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems; and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. It relies on an organizational culture that is proactive and supports continuous learning. CQI is firmly grounded in the overall mission, vision, and values of the agency. Perhaps most importantly, it is dependent upon the active inclusion and participation of staff at all levels of the agency, children, youth, families, and stakeholders throughout the process.

In ACYF-CB-IM-12-07, ACF outlined the key functional components that should be in place in order to implement an effective CQI system. These components are:

1. Foundational Administrative Structure
2. Quality Data Collection
3. Case Record Review Data and Process
4. Analysis and Dissemination of Quality Data
5. Feedback to Stakeholders and Decision-Makers and Adjustment of Programs and Process

PA's Continuous Quality Improvement Effort

PA is committed to the development of a CQI system that recognizes implementation of change at the local level is critical to the achievement of positive child, youth and family outcomes.

Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement effort is not a time limited project, nor is it another new initiative. Rather, PA's work around CQI is an ongoing effort to reshape the system at the local and state level to support the achievement of positive outcomes for our children, youth, and families. Pennsylvania's CQI process is foundationally based on our practice model and standards which define quality practice. We believe that the CQI process that has been developed in Pennsylvania will support staff in improving their practice, which will ultimately lead to healthier children, youth, and families.

Pennsylvania has adopted the American Public Human Services Association's (APHSA) DAPIM™ model as the structured approach to facilitating change at the local level. DAPIM™ stands for "Define, Assess, Plan, Implement, and Monitor." Within the CQI context, the DAPIM™ model is used to: facilitate a county through the identification of priority areas for improvement, root cause analysis, and county improvement plan development and monitoring. All of this occurs through local county teams. A leadership team sets the charge and monitors the work of an improvement team, which consists primarily of line staff and supervisors.

In an ongoing effort to develop the components of a functional CQI system, PA has implemented a standardized case record review process that is designed to provide counties with an understanding of what is "behind" the safety, permanency, and well-being numbers in terms of day-to-day practice in the field and how that practice is impacting child and family functioning and outcomes. The Quality Service Review (QSR) is the state supported case record review component of the CQI process that is used to help assess and monitor progress within counties and statewide. The QSR serves as a measure of [Pennsylvania's Practice Model](#) and standards for child welfare practice and provides a basis for promoting and strengthening best practice. The QSR contains qualitative indicators that measure the current status of the focus child/youth and the child/youth's parents and/or caregivers and the quality and consistency of core practice principles. QSR findings are used for providing safe, positive feedback to frontline staff, supervisors, and program managers. To be effective, the QSR process does not review cases for the purpose of compliance enforcement but rather to evaluate case-specific outcomes and practice performance.

Full implementation of CQI is being conducted utilizing a phased-in approach across the Commonwealth over the course of several years. Implementation is individualized for each county in collaboration with the regional OCYF staff and technical assistance providers that support the county. As each CCYA elects to join the statewide CQI effort, they participate in a state-supported QSR. Counties joining the CQI effort must agree to participate in a state supported QSR at a minimum of once every three years. However,

CCYAs have the option to participate in QSRs as frequently as once every year or once every two years.

Administrators who are interested in the CQI effort should speak with their OCYF regional office representative and are encouraged to reach out to existing CQI counties for feedback on their experiences with CQI and the QSR process. Further information about PA's CQI effort is available on the [University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center website](#).

Technical Assistance (TA) Collaborative

The purpose of the Technical Assistance Collaborative is to have a cohesive group of TA providers who work in collaboration with child welfare agencies to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families as well as to improve communication, increase knowledge, and enhance coordination of TA and other support services provided to the counties.

TA Collaborative Steering Committee – this group is open to all of the Child Welfare TA Partners in Pennsylvania and currently includes administrators from many of the agencies who participate. This group was originally charged with initiating intentional collaboration across all Child Welfare TA Partners. Currently, the Steering Committee holds monthly meetings with agenda items focused on what is happening statewide and in the regional groups. The intent of this group is to ensure needed supports are provided so that collaboration among the TA Partners continues to survive and to thrive.

TA Collaborative Statewide Leads – this includes one statewide lead from each of the partner agencies of the TA Collaborative Steering Committee, (of those who routinely participate in the regional TA Collaborative meetings). This group meets by phone monthly with the intent of ensuring the communication among and between the TA Partners is clear and consistent so that all staff from these agencies have the same information and expectations regarding the Regional Teams.

TA Collaborative Regional Teams – these groups meet quarterly with the intent of ensuring that roles and expectations are clearly defined as the needs of the counties in their respective regions are addressed. The overarching purpose of the TA Collaborative Regional Teams is two-fold as follows:

1. To ensure TA Regional Team members understand the roles, responsibilities, objectives, mission, expectations, and capacity of the respective organizations which comprise the TA Regional Team; and
2. To provide collaborative, thoughtful, organized, and non-duplicated support and resources as requested by counties.

The first purpose listed above is typically accomplished through meetings and follow up communication which primarily involve TA Regional Team members; while the second

purpose is typically accomplished also through meetings and on-going communication that keep all team members informed when involving counties requesting assistance.

TA Collaborative Regional Leads – each regional group is led by two or more leads from the agencies represented by TA Collaborative Regional Teams. This group is charged with planning and implementing the regional collaborative meetings and ensuring that critical communication is passed to and from the Steering Committee and Statewide Leads so that appropriate action can be initiated as needed.

TA Collaborative Member Agencies:

- *American Bar Association (ABA)*
- *Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC)*
- *Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (PACWRC)*
- *Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (HZA)*
- *Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC)*
- *The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)*
- *Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF)*
- *Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators (PCYA)*
- *Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)*

COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS

Collaboration and teaming with systems partners is a foundational component of PA's Child Welfare Practice Model. Indeed, keeping children safe and improving outcomes for children and families cannot be achieved without community partners working together. The following section outlines key collaborative partners that new administrators will want to become familiar with as they begin to plan their leadership of their CCYA

Collaborating with Your County Commissioners

Children and Youth Service agencies must develop and maintain partnerships with many entities. One partner—the County Board of Commissioners or County Council, also directs the work of the CCYA. These commissioners or councils often will appoint a specific member as a liaison to the CCYA. The most effective strategy in working with the Board/Council will be those expected of any employee. Deep and Sussman, in their book *Smart Moves*, suggest that you learn what is important to them. Your colleagues and people in the know suggest that you pay attention to the realities of county government—the budget, election cycles, community sensitivities and priorities, majority and minority status, and working with informal power systems. Wise directors also know what their employers expect of them. Your colleagues suggest that you determine early on what the Board/Council wants to know or expects you to report. Effective communication skills are important here. That means you only “pitch” worthwhile ideas, you do not ask for unnecessary guidance, you make sure the good and bad news comes from you (there are no surprises), and that you accept your share of responsibility for errors and resolve the problems.

Know your community and understand its needs. Build an organization that can respond to those needs. In other words, be very good at your job. (As an old saying reminds us, we should think more about how we can be valuable rather than how valuable we are.) Building an effective organization requires us to be good leaders, make sound fiscal decisions, and resolve problems before they come to the attention of the Commissioners/Council. Price Pritchett—in his *New Work Habits for a Radically Changing World*—suggests that you behave like an owner. “Consider how you can help cut costs, serve the customer better, improve productivity, and innovate.”

Finally, consider the Japanese concept of kaizen—continuous incremental improvement—making small improvements over a course of time using the resources at hand. And never miss the chance to add value. “Prove your worth to the organization. Make a difference. Add enough value so everyone can see that something very important would be missing if you left.”

Collaborating with Citizen Review Panels

Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (Title 23 Pa.C.S., Chapter 63) was amended by Act 146 to address the establishment, function, membership, meetings, and reports relating to [Citizen Review Panels](#) (CRPs) in Pennsylvania. This legislation was enacted to support Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) compliance, as well as to make Pennsylvania eligible for Children's Justice Act funding. The legislation authorizes each panel to examine policies, procedures, and practices of state and local agencies and, where appropriate, specific cases to evaluate the extent to which state and local child protective system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities under Section 106 (b) of CAPTA. The role of the CRPs is to develop annual recommendations to Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services. The legislation mandates the state to respond in writing to the CRPs' recommendations. The recommendations and responses are included in the [Pennsylvania Annual Child Abuse Report](#).

There are three panels established in Pennsylvania which are located in the Northeast, Northwest, and South Central Regions. The CRPs represent a wide array of citizen volunteers who join together to conduct comprehensive reviews of the policies, procedures, and practices in our state and county child welfare system and to collaboratively offer solutions to challenges.

Even though the CRPs are considered independent entities from the child welfare system, it is important for CCYA administrators to work closely with them as collaboration enables CRPs to develop thoughtful recommendations for change. The CRPs work in partnership with the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, and CCYA administrators to ensure concrete recommendations are made that will have a positive impact on the system. The CRPs are supported through a liaison at the University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center. If you have any questions or need more information about the CRPs, please send an email to the liaison at pacrp@pitt.edu.

Collaborating with Your Courts

It is important to become aware of the position that the court holds in your county, especially the role of the court in overseeing CCYA's actions. This influence and control varies greatly from county to county. It is important to meet with the county judges to better understand their expectations for your CCYA when bringing cases before the court and to determine which services the judges may order be provided to children and families. Judges are also expected to have input into and sign off on your annual Needs Based Plan and Budget. Involving them in the development of such is incredibly important.

It is also critically important to be an administrative partner with your lead dependency judge in regards to system change. More and more system change discussions and actions are resulting from the activities of Local Children's Roundtables. While the lead dependency judge is asked to convene these local groups, the actual meetings are

best when jointly planned and facilitated. Also important is your participation in the Leadership Roundtables. These groups meet two times per year and are grouped by like sized counties. During the meetings, judges and child welfare administrators have an opportunity to discuss similar concerns, possible solutions and issues that should rise to the State Roundtable. For more information regarding the Children's Roundtable click [here](#).

Courts are governed by statutes, case law, and procedural rules. It is very important that you have read and understand these. Additionally, judges are supported through the Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook. This document provides a guide for judges who preside over dependency cases. Being well versed in the document can help CCYAs understand how judicial determinations are made and what to expect in the different dependency proceedings. Finally, the [Mission and Guiding Principles for Pennsylvania's Child Dependency System](#) is critical for CCYAs. This document identifies mission statement/guiding principles of dependency court. You and your staff should be intimately familiar with this document.

It is also important to meet with the CCYA solicitor to understand local court procedures. Becoming familiar and adhering to the court's expectations can enhance CCYA's ability to advocate for and serve children and families. Should you wish to provide a new or expanded service to children and families, it is advisable to discuss the specifics of the proposed program prior to implementation with the court. If you are aware of such a program in another county or state, it is important to note it. Judges often will contact a colleague in another jurisdiction to find out how the program is doing. You will benefit from the input of the court and judicial support for establishing and expanding programs and services.

When possible, it is useful for your CCYA and for the court to meet periodically to determine how the court perceives your staff's performance and whether the court wants specific changes in services or procedures. In some counties, these meetings already may be in place. It is important to work collaboratively with the court to achieve the best results for your clients.

The permanency initiatives previously discussed, [American Bar Association's \(ABA\) PA Barriers to Permanency Project](#) and [Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Court's \(AOPC\) Permanency Practice Initiative](#) seek to enhance the CCYA/court collaboration.

Collaborating with Your Juvenile Probation Office

Children and Youth should develop and maintain a positive working relationship with the [Juvenile Probation Office](#) (JPO) for many reasons. First, you will be working together to prepare budget plans, program, and financial requests. Also, you will want to maximize the revenues available to your county for both agencies. This relationship with JPO might be a challenge for you for historical reasons in your county or because the Juvenile Probation Office reports to the court rather than to the County Commissioners. However, it is important to communicate to understand the roles and responsibilities for

delivering essential services in your community and to identify opportunities to work together effectively.

There will also be times when both agencies will share case responsibility for the same child and family. A dual adjudication may be appropriate in some cases. Research that indicates a relationship between child abuse and neglect, truancy and subsequent delinquency.

Juvenile Probation also is mission driven, performance based, and outcome focused. [Balanced and Restorative Justice](#) (BARJ) is the foundation for probation services and has three components: community protection, accountability/Victim Awareness, and competency development. In 2010, Juvenile Probation incorporated system wide evidence based practices to more effectively meet its BARJ goals with its *Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy* and adopted this Statement of Purpose:

To work in partnership to enhance the capacity of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system to achieve its balanced and restorative justice mission by: employing evidence-based practices, with fidelity, at every stage of the juvenile justice process; collecting and analyzing the data necessary to measure the results of these efforts; and, with this knowledge, striving to continuously improve the quality of our decisions, services and programs.

Collaborating with Your Mental Health System

To understand the importance of Children and Youth Services developing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the mental health system, it is important to understand that the foundations of that system are built upon the idea that practice is focused on the mental illness of the caregiver, but there is a potential for the child and the family also to be affected by the parent's mental illness. Mental illness often is considered to be a family problem, and the needs of the entire family must be assessed in terms of safety and risk to the children under the care of an adult with a diagnosis of mental illness. Many reactions and behaviors indicative of a mental illness affect other areas of a person's life and must be addressed as to their effect on the children in the home. Child welfare professionals must be able to understand the impact of mental illness on other family systems to accurately assess safety and risk factors related to child abuse and neglect. Your county has a local mental health agency that can assist you in assessing and planning services for the families to whom you provide services.

It is also important to collaborate with the mental health system around meeting the mental health needs of children the CCYA serves. Local mental health agencies provide many services that treat and support children's mental health. Medical Assistance covers many of these services.

Collaborating with Your Drug and Alcohol System

When chemical dependency threatens a child's safety, services must be provided to the

child and family to restore stability and promote optimal development in healthy family functioning. When collaborating with the drug and alcohol system in your community, you can develop an understanding of the treatment programs available to assist families. Treatment programs often are based on “12-step models” that encourage open disclosure to a group by family members and the chemically dependent individual. While treatment programs understand the importance of involving the family in the recovery process it may be difficult to engage them in this process due to the child’s or the family’s reluctance to participate, distance to the treatment program, associated costs, etc. Thus, treatment programs are more client-centered. In child welfare:

- Policies and services must reflect the needs of children who are effected either by prenatal alcohol or drug exposure related to their parents’ chemical involvement or dependency;
- Parental chemical dependency does not alter the requirements of state and federal laws. Recommendations for improved services to chemically involved children and families must be addressed within existing legal frameworks, such as the Juvenile Act, which establishes timelines under which permanency must be achieved;
- The complex needs of the chemically dependent family must be considered in planning. Family involvement is essential and must be supported beginning with the delivery of preventive services through treatment intervention, permanency planning, and final implementation of the permanency plan; and
- Child welfare services to chemically dependent children and families should be comprehensive, community-based, and coordinated through an active case manager who can provide linkage with a range of alcohol and drug prevention, treatment, and aftercare services.

Your county has a local drug and alcohol agency that can assist you in providing services to families in which drug and alcohol issues have been identified. For more information, visit www.ddap.pa.gov.

Collaborating with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning

[The Office of Child Development and Early Learning \(OCDEL\)](#) provide families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success. Funded jointly by the Departments of Education (PDE) and Human Services (DHS), and structured as a dual deputate, OCDEL administers and unifies child-serving systems. Programs that are funded and managed by OCDEL include Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, Early Intervention, Keystone STARS, home visiting programs, childcare certification, and Child Care Works subsidized childcare.

OCDEL is responsible for the regulation of all childcare centers, group childcare homes, and family childcare homes. Through the certification process, OCDEL ensures that

childcare programs meet health and safety standards and are in compliance with federal and state law and regulations. OCDEL is responsible for the oversight, monitoring and reporting of the commonwealth quality rating and improvement system for early learning providers known as Keystone STARS. OCDEL also manages Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (publicly funded preschool), Maternal, Infant Early Childhood Home Visitation Program, the Children's Trust Fund and Parent Child Home Program. All eligible children from birth to school age with developmental delays receive services and supports to maximize their development through OCDEL administered early intervention. OCDEL also manages Pennsylvania's Child Care Works program and Child Care Information Services (CCIS) which assists eligible families in obtaining the financial assistance they need to supplement childcare costs.

Collaborating with the Education System

School systems are built upon the premise of connecting various subject matters with diverse populations to meet the education, emotional, developmental, and social needs of children. The primary focus of school district personnel is child-centered, but the educational success of the children only can be met if education becomes a family-centered approach to learning and parents are involved in their child's schooling. When a child encounters learning difficulties, it becomes even more critical to involve parents and other support systems to meet their needs. Involvement with a CCYA due to abuse and neglect issues, adds yet another dimension to the already demanding academic life of the child, as well as to the family dynamics. It is in the best interests of the child and the family if representatives from various support systems view themselves as members of a team whose objective it is to formulate a plan to assure the child's safety and well-being.

For child welfare professionals to assist parents in being part of a team, it is crucial that they know basic educational rights, the support systems for these rights, and how to work with schools in securing access to programs and services that will benefit their clients educationally, emotionally, and socially.

Some of these support systems working together with school district personnel on behalf of a mutual client may include parents, child welfare professionals, psychologists, mental health counselors, medical personnel, drug and alcohol counselors, occupational and/or physical therapists, Pennsylvania Child and Adolescent Service System Program ([CASSP](#)), school nurse, and speech and language therapists.

Get to know the superintendents, principals, teachers, and counselors in the schools located in your county. This will assist you in building positive working relationships that will assist the families and children you serve.

Collaborating with Your Domestic Relations Section

The relationship between the CCYA and the [Domestic Relations Section](#) (DRS)

primarily is related to the role of the DRS in establishing and enforcing support orders and payments for dependent children in the custody of CCYAs. The DRS will also perform genetic testing for CCYA clients as ordered by the court. There is a fee billed to the CCYA for genetic testing. The DRS also can be a source to locate missing parents and families. Conference officers and hearing officers determine support obligations in accordance with the support guidelines found in the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure. It is helpful to identify liaisons from both offices for this purpose.

- *Accessing the Paternity Tracking System (PTS) for Certified Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) Forms*

CCYA staff has direct access to paternity data stored on the PTS and the electronic images of stored AOP forms. The PTS is a database application that stores paternity data from voluntary AOP forms executed for children born out-of-marriage. The PTS is maintained by the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM), Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE). Electronic images of AOP forms are stored and may be accessed directly from the PTS.

- *Rescission of Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) Forms*

If there is a valid AOP form on file for the child in question and the mother and/or father request DNA testing, the AOP must be rescinded prior to DNA testing. The mother and/or father must provide a signed rescission request to the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE).

Rescission of the AOP form will only occur if the rescission request is dated within sixty days of the date the AOP was signed or the date of a judicial proceeding related to the child. Additionally, the rescission request must be signed and dated. A coversheet providing the contact's name and direct telephone number along with the request must be faxed to BCSE at 717-787-0297.

After the expiration of the sixty-day rescission period, an AOP form can only be challenged in court on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact. Should the court uphold the challenge and rescind paternity, the court would issue an order that contains the mother's, father's, and child's names and dates of birth, and one of the aforementioned reasons for the rescission. A coversheet providing the contact's name and direct telephone number along with the court order must be faxed to BCSE at 717-787-0297.

Collaborating with Your County Assistance Office

The relationship between the CCYA and the [County Assistance Office](#) (CAO) serves two purposes. At the in-home services level, the CCYA and the CAO are expected to identify a liaison within each agency to streamline communication, pursuant to Bulletin 99-99-01. The purpose of this bulletin is to coordinate the efforts of both agencies to serve mutual clients. An Agreement of Mutual Responsibility is developed by the TANF recipient and the CAO caseworker and is shared with the CCYA caseworker. Likewise,

the CCYA caseworker develops the Family Service Plan (FSP) with the family and shares it with the CAO caseworker. The liaisons will work together to resolve conflicts between the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility and FSP requirements as they arise. Release forms are required and are directed to the appropriate liaison.

The CCYA caseworker and the CAO caseworker also work jointly to determine TANF and IV-E eligibility for dependent children in the custody of the CCYA. Any changes in the children's living situation must be reported to the CAO. These changes may impact the children's physical and/or behavioral health care coverage.

It is important to maintain positive working relationships between the two agencies. The CAO often has pertinent information regarding the child's name, social security number, date of birth, and parentage. They can also assist CCYAs with locating missing families by withholding benefits or contacting the caseworker when appointments are scheduled.

Collaborating with Medical Assistance Managed Care Organizations

Nearly all children in out-of-home care are eligible to receive health care coverage under Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance (MA) program. In PA, the state contracts with a number of managed care organizations (MCOs) to administer both the physical health and mental health components of the MA program. Each of the physical health managed care organizations (PH-MCO) has Special Needs Unit Coordinators (SNUC). The primary role of the SNUCs is to provide coordination of and access to health care services for their members with special physical and behavioral health care needs. The SNUCs assist members with access to care, coordination of care with multiple providers, and connection to community resources. SNUCs can provide ongoing case management; assist with scheduling appointments, referrals, and coordination and collaboration between PH-MCOs and BH-MCOs (behavioral health managed care organizations). The SNUCs track and coordinate Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services and assist with transitioning members to adult health care services.

Children with special health care needs are those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and require additional health care and related services. A special need can be short or long term; not diagnosis driven; based on circumstances, situations, or needs. Children involved with the child welfare system are considered to have special needs and eligible to receive services through the SNU. You and/or your staff should get to know the SNUCs in each of the PH-MCOs in your county as well as counties where you have children in out-of-home placement. Establishing a working relationship with the MCOs is beneficial in coordinating health care services for the children you serve.

Collaborating with The Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Families Services

The Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth, and Families Services ([PCCYFS](#)) is a statewide membership association of private agencies. The mission of PCCYFS is to improve the quality of life for Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families who are at-risk by supporting and promoting an accessible service delivery system within communities.

PCCYFS presents a united voice on behalf of the private provider community and works to influence [public policy](#) and the regulatory and funding environments. Creating opportunities for professional development and networking are also priorities. The Council is an advocate for service providers in child welfare, behavioral health, prevention, and juvenile justice.

Originally incorporated in 1976 as the Pennsylvania Council of Voluntary Child Care Agencies, a new name was adopted 10 years later - the Pennsylvania Council of Children's Services. In 1999, through partnership with a regional association, the Children, Youth and Family Council, a stronger, statewide association was created. This new structure was made official in 2000.

The [membership](#) of the Council is diverse in agency size, scope of services, and geographic location. This adds greatly to the effectiveness of the united voice on behalf of children and families. The Council supports more than [125 members](#) statewide and maintains relationships with all 67 counties. Through the members directly, an extensive collection of resources, skills, and experience is available. Staff provides representation, information, and support.

Council members serve non-adjudicated, dependent, and delinquent populations and the families of these children and youth. They provide a broad range of residential, therapeutic, and supportive services, ranging from prevention and in-home services to foster and campus-based residential and residential-treatment services. Member agencies also offer a variety of behavioral health services and educational programs. The Council supports all safety, permanency, and well-being efforts to ensure that the needs of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable children, youth, and families are appropriately and effectively met.

Many CCYAs build collaborative relationships with the private providers in their community and contract for services to improve outcomes for the children and families served. To learn more about the PCCYFS visit their web site at www.pccyfs.org. Administrators also can contact the association by email at hbgoffice@pccyfs.org or phone (717) 651-1725.

Collaborating with The Rehabilitation & Community Providers Association

The [Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association](#) (RCPA) is an association whose members are community agencies providing services including mental health, substance use disorder, intellectual and developmental disability, autism, vocational, residential, medical rehabilitation, and brain trauma. RCPA is among the nation's largest and most diverse state health and human services associations, with more than 350 members that serve one in six Pennsylvanians annually.

RCPA serves as a forum for the exchange of information and experience, represents providers on legislative and administrative matters, and serves as a point of contact with other related statewide organizations. RCPA maintains an active Children's Committee with subgroups focused on early childhood mental health, youth forensic issues, residential treatment, and a range of other child-adolescent service areas. The key contact for children and youth related matters are Connell O'Brien at cobrien@paproviders.org.

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