



## OhioKAN

### Pennsylvania: Post-Adoption Program

#### Research Summary

**Title of Program:** Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN), Pennsylvania

**Years it Operated:** 1992-present

**Number of families Served:** SWAN has facilitated 38,200 adoptions since 1992<sup>9</sup>.

**Cost of Program:** In 2013, Pennsylvania earmarked \$4.6 million of its state budget for Post-Adoption Services.<sup>6</sup> Current annual funding for Post-Adoption Services is not yet available online.

**Funding Source:** The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services receives federal Title IV-E, Title IV-E Part B, State child welfare funds, and other Adoption Incentive program funds to implement SWAN.<sup>6</sup>

**Description of the Program:** Child Welfare Services in Pennsylvania are state supervised and county administered<sup>10</sup>. Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) began in 1992.<sup>1</sup> SWAN partners with the Department of Human Services, the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE), Diakon Lutheran Services Ministry, public and private human service agencies, non-profits, judges, court advocates and with foster and adoptive parents.<sup>1</sup>

PAE is an important piece of SWAN, PAE works directly with Pennsylvania's counties, SWAN affiliate agencies, the public, and other national adoption exchanges.<sup>1</sup> PAE recruits families, matches waiting children, and provides information and referral services to prospective parents seeking to adopt in Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup>

Diakon Lutheran Services Ministry is the program administrator for SWAN and it offers technical assistance and professional training to public and private child welfare agencies that support best practices for the adoption community in Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

The primary goal of SWAN is fast-tracking permanency for children waiting to be adopted from the public child welfare system.<sup>3</sup> Every child entering the public child welfare system is eligible for pre-adoption services with SWAN. Post-adoption support services are available to all adoptive, kinship, and legal custodianship families in Pennsylvania through SWAN's affiliate agencies and community partners,<sup>3</sup> including to families who have adopted privately and internationally.<sup>8</sup> SWAN partners with 151 affiliate agencies throughout the state, including The Children's Home of Pittsburgh, Child to Family Connections, Children's Home of Easton, and Bethesda Lutheran Services.<sup>4</sup>

Four main components comprise SWAN's post-adoption services program:

1. Families can self-refer for services through SWAN's helpline staffed with information and referral specialists daily.<sup>1</sup>
2. SWAN offers case assessment and case advocacy for adoptive families to help support permanency. The intensity of case management is determined by the family's individual needs, with the principal goal being to prevent disruption of the placement.<sup>1</sup> Affiliate agencies conduct a needs and strengths assessment, create a family support plan, and coordinate services to help strengthen families moving forward<sup>1</sup>. These services can be educational, mental health, healthcare, and mediation with a focus on adoption and foster care competence from service providers.<sup>1</sup>
3. SWAN offers families access to support groups in each county. These support groups are for the adoption community as well as for those with connections to foster and kinship care.<sup>1</sup>
4. Lastly, SWAN offers families planned respite to help mitigate pressures felt by parenting children who potentially have a myriad of special needs.<sup>1</sup> SWAN's confidential post-adoption support services are free to all families in Pennsylvania who have "provided permanency for children and youth."<sup>1</sup>

**Who benefits from the Program?** Any adoptive, kinship, or custodianship family that has provided permanency for a child in Pennsylvania. As of 2014, SWAN had helped to facilitate 38,200 adoptions in the Pennsylvania Commonwealth.<sup>8</sup>

**What services/benefits do they receive?** Prospective adoption families are offered pre-adoption services. Adoptive, kinship, and custodianship families who finalized adoptions and made a commitment to permanency for children are offered free post-adoption services (e.g., case assessment, case advocacy, referral to services, support groups, and planned respite services).<sup>1</sup>

**How do they receive the benefits/services?** Social workers provide the initial visit to complete the needs and and strengths assessment in families' homes. After the initial visit, the social worker provides up to six months' case management and advocacy at home and at various community locations with families.<sup>7</sup>

**Where are the services provided?** Adoptive families receive services at home, in the community, and at other various locations.

#### Sources:

1. Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN): <http://adoptpakids.org/Swan.aspx>
2. SWAN Post Permanency: <http://adoptpakids.org/PostPermanency.aspx>
3. Child to Family Connections SWAN: <https://childtofamilyconnections.org/swan/>
4. Diakon SWAN: <https://www.diakon-swan.org/swan/contacts/affiliate/?page=1>
5. DHS Pennsylvania SWAN: <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/childwelfareservices/adoptioninpennsylvania/index.htm>
6. Donaldson Adoption Institute: Profiles of Publicly Funded Post-Adoption Services, 2014: <https://www.adoptioninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Supporting-and-Preserving-Families.pdf>
7. Children's Home of Pittsburgh (Post Adoption Services): <http://www.childrenshomepgh.org/adoption/other-services/post-adoption-information-support/>
8. Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange: <http://www.adoptpakids.org/AdoptionExchange.aspx>
9. Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange Annual Report (2014): [http://www.adoptpakids.org/Documents/PAE\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.adoptpakids.org/Documents/PAE_Annual_Report_2014.pdf)
10. Child Welfare Information Gateway: State Vs. County Administration, 2018: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/services/>