

**Independent
Living
(IL)
Welcome
Guide**

Independent Living Staff Welcome Guide

Welcome to the Independent Living (IL) Staff Welcome Guide. This document contains information that can be utilized by new IL staff to familiarize themselves with best practices, Pennsylvania older youth initiatives, resources, and how the Child Welfare Resource Center can support them. If at any time you need additional support, please contact your county assigned Practice Improvement Specialist or Meghan O'Hare (meo43@pitt.edu), Older Youth Program Development Specialist.

Words of Wisdom from Veteran Staff

"You cannot do this work alone; find community partners, form an advisory council, advocate to have additional staff who are dedicated to only providing IL services."

"Engage the youth; ask for their input/feedback, offer them leadership opportunities."

"Provide hands-on learning, opportunities to give back (community service projects), ways to explore career paths (job shadowing)."

"Celebrate and acknowledge (recognition banquet) all the youth's accomplishments and progress based on their goals and ability; not what you want/wish for them."

"Advocate for, locate, and/or create needed youth services. Collaborate with adjoining counties when possible."



The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

The CWRC provides a continuum of services designed to facilitate and sustain positive change in the child welfare system. Our services include training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, research and evaluation, project management, and organizational development.

Our Approach and Focus

- Conducting research and evaluation;
- Providing consultation and support;
- Developing and revising tools, materials, and curricula;
- Training child welfare professionals;
- Integrating youth and family engagement;
- Advocating for policy and practice improvements;
- Developing and implementing a quality improvement process;
- Organizing and sponsoring events; and
- Providing resource coordination.

The CWRC is comprised of the following departments:

- Administrative
- Curriculum and Trainer Development
- Fiscal and Human Resources
- Organizational Effectiveness/Regional Teams
- Research and Evaluation
- Statewide Quality Improvement
- Technology Development

Our Mission

The CWRC is a national leader in advocating for an enhanced quality of life for Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families. In partnership with families, communities, and public and private agencies, we prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research, and a commitment to best practice.

Our Vision

Every child, youth, and family experiences a life rich with positive opportunities, nurturing relationships, and supportive communities.

Collaboration

The CWRC is a collaborative effort of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. It was established to train direct service workers, supervisors, administrators, and foster parents in

providing social services to abused and neglected children and their families. The Resource Center is centrally managed and regionally administered by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work.

Funding

The CWRC is made possible through grant funds from the Department of Human Services to the University of Pittsburgh.

For additional information, please visit our website at <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/>.

Pennsylvania Practice Model

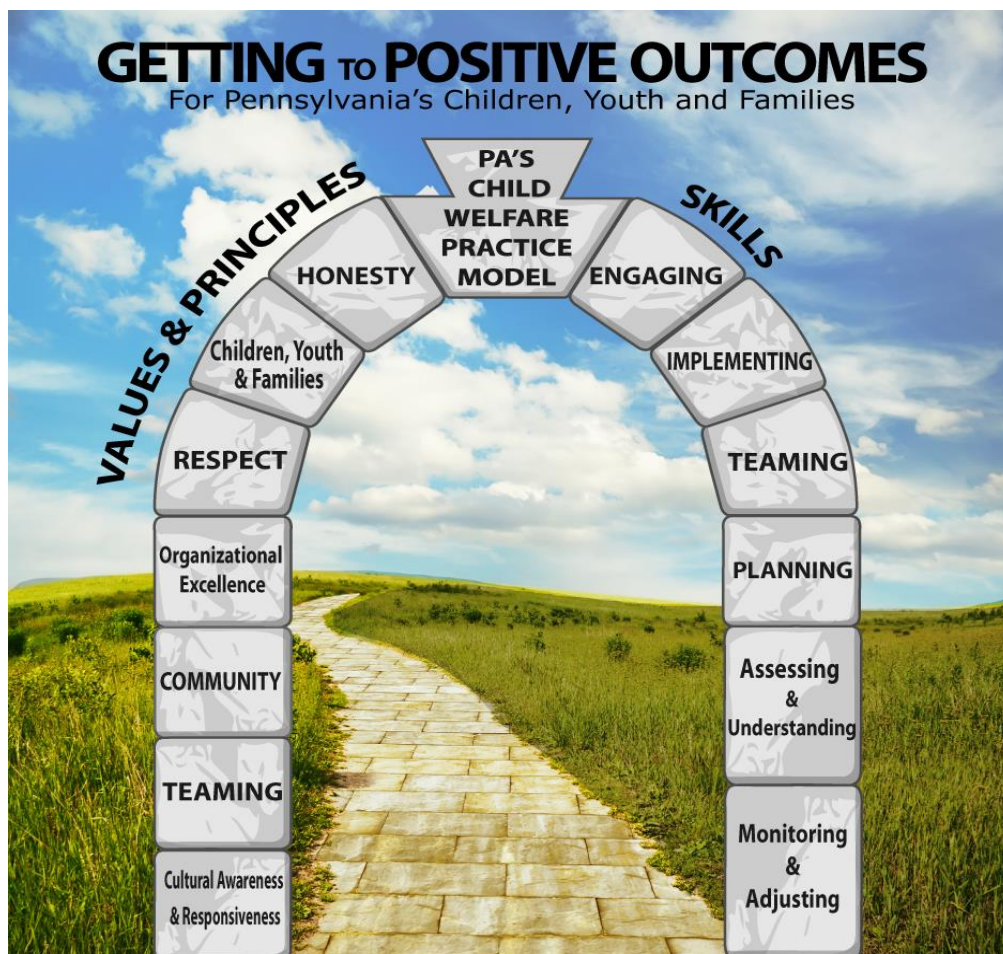
What is a Child Welfare Practice Model?

To help families achieve positive outcomes, child welfare systems throughout the country, including Pennsylvania, have strengthened their approaches to practice. Practice models guide the work of those involved with the child welfare system to work together to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. Practice models serve as the "explicit link connecting...policy, practice, training, supervision and quality assurance with its mission, values, and strategic plan" (NRCOI, 2008). The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement's 2012 "Guide for Developing and Implementing Child Welfare Practice Models" outlines that a clearly articulated practice model helps:

- **Child welfare executives, administrators, and managers** identify the outcomes they hope to achieve; develop a vision and consistent rationale for organizational and policy decision; decide how to use agency resources; define staff performance expectations; develop an array of services; create a qualitative case review system; collaborate with families and youth; and work across systems.
- **Supervisors** fulfill their role as keepers of the agency's culture with responsibility for: training, guiding, and supporting frontline staff; monitoring and assessing staff performance and child/family outcomes; modeling the agency's values and approach to working with families; and observing and advocating for needed change.
- **Child Welfare and IL Workers** have a consistent basis for decision making; clear expectations and values for their approach to working with families, children, and youth; a focus on desired outcomes; guidance in working with service providers and other child welfare serving systems; and a way to evaluate their own performance.

The Community, the network of stakeholders, and children, youth, and families to engage with the agency in fulfilling its mission by: ensuring effective and consistent practice; articulating the need for funding; and clarifying the purpose and scope of the child welfare system; and communicating the values, principles and skills the child welfare system should possess as well as the outcomes the child welfare system hopes to achieve.

Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model outlines that children, youth, families, child welfare representatives, and other child and family service partners need to work together as team members with the shared community responsibility to achieve positive outcomes. These outcomes can be achieved by consistently modeling the values and principles at every level and across all partnerships and by demonstrating the specific and essential skills to be utilized across all aspects of the child welfare system.



Independent Living Movement

State and national studies revealed that older adolescents who had been discharged from care were often found in the care of the state as adults either through the criminal justice system or as public welfare recipients, or as residents in shelters for the homeless. The most significant event sparking the national Independent Living movement was Willie Palmer vs. Mario Cuomo in the New York State Supreme Court. Willie, an older foster child, discharged to the streets with no more than his "state suitcase," a plastic garbage bag carrying his few possessions, died a violent death on the streets trying to stay alive. Willie's death sparked reforms in New York and across the nation in an effort to develop new programs and services for older children aging out of the foster care system.

History of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood

In 1999, Congress passed the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, which was signed into law as the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This law: doubled the Federal Title IV-E Independent Living funding nationwide to approximately 140,000,000; required states to serve youth up to age 21, for the first time, youth beginning at age 14 may receive age-appropriate services; permits up to 30% of allocation to be used for room and board for youth ages 18-21 who have left foster care; allows states to provide Medicaid insurance to youth ages 18-21 who left foster care; increases youth's savings account limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000 so that youth in foster care can save and still be eligible for Title IV-E foster care benefits; requires states develop outcome measures to assess state performance; requires states to use Title IV-E funds to train adoptive/foster care parents, workers in group homes, and case managers to help them address issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living; and authorizes additional funds for adoption incentive payments to states that increased the number of children adopted from foster care. This law made substantial changes in the federal efforts targeted toward youth and young adults (up to age 21) in the foster care component of the child welfare system. The law significantly improved states' ability to achieve the national goals of safety, permanence, and well-being for youth and young adults in the child welfare system.

For additional information on this program, please visit

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/chafee-foster-care-program>.

Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines (IL Bulletin) and Appendix

The purpose of this bulletin is to transmit guidelines and requirements for the successful development and implementation of Youth Independent Living (IL) services through county children and youth agencies (CCYA) and their contract service providers. The appendix is not meant to replace the bulletin, but rather to compliment it as a practical resource to support successful implementation of IL services across the Commonwealth. The appendix is divided into several sections targeted at key stakeholders as identified in the table of contents. There is a specific section for each of the following key stakeholders: youth and young adults; birth families and kin; resource families; IL coordinators; administrators and fiscal officers; child welfare professionals; juvenile justice professionals; and judges, attorneys, and court personnel. In addition, a section on youth status and eligibility for services and the statutory and regulatory authority (Appendix B) are provided. All readers are strongly encouraged to read both sections before moving to other sections of the appendix because this information is used as the foundation for the implementation of IL services in PA. The appendix also includes a wide array of resources for stakeholders implementing the bulletin. These resources include sample documents, state-related and national websites, and other information pertaining to youth in the child welfare system. Please note that the IL bulletin is not meant to be prescriptive. The Office of Children, Youth and Families has allowed counties the opportunity to be flexible and creative in how they provide services to youth, recognizing that needs and practices vary from county to county across PA.

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Documents/FORMS%20AND%20PUBS%20OCYF/OCYF%203130-14-01.pdf>

Extension of Aftercare Services and Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Children, Youth and Families is pleased to announce that effective July 1, 2020, older Pennsylvania youth exiting the foster care system are eligible for aftercare services through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) program until their 23rd birthday. Previously, youth became ineligible for aftercare services on their 21st birthday.

This change offers older youth the ability to continue to receive Chafee aftercare services that meet their needs as they continue their transition to adulthood. Aftercare services include the full range of IL services and supports, which can include needs assessment/case planning, life skills training, prevention services, education, support services, employment, location of housing, room and board, stipends, retreats and camps, indirect services, and program administration.

Chafee aftercare services are available to any youth who exited foster care on or after their 14th birthday and prior to their 23rd birthday. Eligible youth include:

- Youth who experience foster care at age 14 or older
- Youth who exited care at age 18 or extended care up to age 21
- Youth who exited care through adoption or legal guardian after attaining age 16
- Youth who exited care through reunification at age 14 or older

County children and youth agencies (CCYA) have the option of providing aftercare services to youth ages 14 and 15 who achieved permanency through adoption or PLC using their local funding. Room and board services are for youth who exited care on or after 18 to age 23 as well as youth who resume dependency or remain dependent past the age of 18. No more than 30% of Chafee funds may be used for room and board for youth ages 18-23.

The provision of aftercare services is mandatory, and aftercare services provided to an individual youth must be described in the youth's transition plan. Youth electing to discontinue participation with voluntary services are eligible to re-request services up to age 23.

CCYAs should include the expansion of aftercare services to former foster care youth to age 23 in the 2021-22 Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB), Independent (IL) Grant request.

In addition, effective July 1, 2020, the Chafee Education and Training Voucher program, known as Education and Training Grant (ETG) in Pennsylvania, will now serve youth up until their 26th birthday (previously 23rd birthday). Youth may participate in the program for up to five years, whether consecutive or not.

ETG eligibility includes youth who are in foster care or discharged from foster care on or after attaining age 16 or exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal guardianship. The ETG application for the current academic year can be found online at:

<https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>.

Youth applying for ETG will be evaluated to determine if they also qualify for the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (FosterEd). The FosterEd program requires Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions to award a waiver of tuition and to waive mandatory fees for Pennsylvania resident youth who meet Chafee ETG eligibility requirements and who have applied for all available federal and state grants. Information about the FosterEd program can be found at: <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml>.

CCYAs and providers should inform youth about ETG and FosterEd programs. CCYAs should consider any staff needs related to assisting older youth with post-secondary applications/enrollment as part of the NBPB IL Grant request.

Independent Living Services Coordinators Role

In your role as the IL Services Coordinator:

- Your ultimate responsibility is to ensure older youth make a successful transition from out-of-home placement.
- You are the county children and youth agency's designated individual who is responsible to coordinate the requirements of the IL bulletin.
- You may also be responsible to comply with the requirements of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and to make available timely services designed to achieve positive outcomes for youth. The IL Coordinator may have other tasks and responsibilities in addition to this role.

- Additionally, you may be the primary IL contact for OCYF and the PA CWRC and should have knowledge of IL services, the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program, and implementation of IL services.
 - These services include identification, referral needs assessment, planning coordination and delivery of IL services, including aftercare services, for eligible youth up to age 21 regardless of whether the youth is currently in care or not.
 - These services should be tailored to meet the youth's needs based on the assessment of needs in the areas of life skills, education, employment, support, permanency, prevention, and housing.

Annual IL Site Visits

Each year, the Resource Center Practice Improvement Specialist assigned to your county will contact you to set up a visit to review your program, highlighting your strengths, addressing challenges you may have, and offering technical assistance (TA) or resources to continue to support the work you are providing to older youth. To continue to strengthen services and outcomes for IL youth and to build partnerships, CWRC will invite the following:

- Office of Children, Youth, and Families Regional Representative.
- Children and Youth Agency Administrator and management staff.
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network staff.
- IL Supervisor/IL Coordinator

PI's will seek the assistance of counties to invite the following:

- Youth and alumni in regular IL and aftercare who are currently receiving IL services.
Fiscal Officer (does not need to attend the entire meeting but should be available for the fiscal portion of the discussion).
- Casework staff working directly with older youth.
- Other staff, including permanency professionals and private providers.
- Recommended but not required: Technical Assistance (TA) partners, which may include the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts; American Bar Association; etc.

Data about your planned services for the current fiscal year (FY) will be gathered by the Practice Improvement Specialist from your Needs Based Plan and Budget request prior to the visit. During the visit, discussion will be related to the strengths and challenges of the program and services.

Training and TA continue to be available to counties for IL services. Your TA collaborative partners can help you determine what training and services are available, what needs to be developed and how to best support continuous quality improvement efforts for your IL program. Whether it is developing policies, improving youth engagement efforts, beginning a new program, or connecting to community resources, TA efforts are tailored to the specific needs of the IL program to improve services and outcomes for youth and young adults.

Follow-up visits will be conducted with every county to present the approved IL report and to share findings (like the QSR process). This will occur within 90 days of the onsite visit.

Technical Assistance (TA)

Resource Center Practice Improvement Specialists work with child welfare agencies to support organizational change and the implementation of best practice across PA. Requests for TA related to older youth, youth engagement, training, and Youth Advisory Board activities can also be made through your Regional Practice Improvement Specialist. Please visit <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/OE-RT.htm> if you are unsure who your Practice Improvement Specialist is.

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), the Diakon-SWAN, LLC, for the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), and the PA CWRC's Independent Living Project collaborate for quarterly and statewide events throughout the year. We encourage county children and youth agencies to attend, including caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators. SWAN/IL meetings are posted on the Diakon-SWAN website at <http://diakon-swan.org/swan/events/upcoming/>.

Independent Living programs across the Commonwealth partner successfully with SWAN Affiliate agencies to provide SWAN Units of Service for older youth. These partnerships help youth achieve permanency, find permanent connections, and prepare for a successful transition to adulthood. Attached you will find a document describing these services for staff as well as a youth-friendly document.

Appendix 1 & 2

[SWAN Units of Service Definitions](#)

[SWAN Services](#)

Regional IL Networking Sessions

Regional IL Networking sessions generally occur quarterly in 6 regions across the state including:

- **Northeast Region** (CWRC training room in Pittston) – contact Jill Ferraro jab462@pitt.edu
- **Southeast Region** (CWRC training room in Norristown) – Angela Plantz ANP202@pitt.edu
- **North Central Region** – contact Clarissa Shirk chshirk@clintoncountypa.com
- **South Central Region** – contact Dennis Lentz dlentz@adamscounty.us
- **Western Region** – contact Cassie Kreckel CEK83@pitt.edu

The purpose of these sessions are for professionals working with older youth to come together for training, networking, and resource sharing. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about promising practices and to develop relationships with others who do similar work in your region.

National Youth in Transition Database

<https://www.getnytdpa.org>

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/NYTD.htm>

The **Foster Care Independence Act of 1999** aims to assist youth aging out of foster care in the United States in obtaining and maintaining independent living skills. Youth aging out of foster care, or transitioning out of the formal foster care system, are one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. As youth age out of the foster care system at age 18, they are expected to become self-sufficient immediately, even though, on average, youth in the United States are not expected to reach self-sufficiency until age 26.

With the passage of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, funding was increased to enable states to design, conduct, and evaluate independent living programs with the purpose of assisting youth as they transition out of foster care. States are encouraged to create programs that support youth by addressing finances, housing, health, education, and employment. The bill also increases support to youth aging out of foster care in other ways, such as broadening the eligibility requirements to obtain Medicaid and increasing funding for adoption incentives.

As part of the Foster Care Independence Act (FCIA) of 1999, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is required to develop and

implement a data collection system to (1) track the independent living services states provide to youth, and (2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess state performance in operating their independent living programs. The data collection system, the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), was established, and on February 26, 2008, the Children's Bureau published a final rule on NYTD in the Federal Register. The final rule outlines new requirements for states to collect and report youth data. States' compliance with these regulations began **October 1, 2010**.

What data is collected and reported?

States are required to engage in two data collection and reporting activities on:

1. Each youth who receives independent living services; and
2. The outcomes of youth who are aging out or have aged out of foster care.

States report to NYTD four types of information about youth:

1. Services provided to youth (see service categories listed below);
2. Youth characteristics (such as tribal membership, education level, and special education status);
3. Outcomes (foster care status and outcome reporting status); and
4. Basic demographics (date of birth, sex, and race/ethnicity).

When does the data need to be collected and reported?

States **collect** independent living services information continuously and outcomes information biannually (i.e., every 6 months). States **report** the data collected (services and outcomes information) to ACF biannually. States collect information on any youth receiving at least one independent living service during the 6-month report period. Service data are collected regardless of the youth's age (e.g., could be 14 or 21 years old depending on the state's eligible service population). Service data are collected regardless of whether the youth is in foster care at the time of the service.

States collect and report longitudinal outcomes data on youth who are aging out or have aged out of foster care. States collect outcomes data on a cohort of youth, with a new cohort beginning every three years. Each cohort consists of the following:

Baseline Population

All youth who are in *foster care at 17 years of age.

You must enter yes to #1 and either #2 or #3 below in order for youth to be included in the FFY 2017 Baseline Population.

1. Youth turns 17 years old during the FFY 2017 (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017)

2. **AND** was in *foster care on his or her 17th birthday
3. **OR** entered *foster care between his or her 17th birthday and 45 days after this date

***Foster care is defined as:**

Non-relative foster homes, kinship foster homes, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. Foster care is not youth who are in their own homes under the supervision of the county child welfare agency, youth development centers/youth forestry camps, detention centers, secure residential facilities, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, or hospitals.

Follow-up Population

The same youth surveyed in the baseline population, who are surveyed as they age at 19 years old and again at 21 years old, regardless of whether they remain in foster care.

What independent living services must be reported?

States report that a youth received a service in one or more of the following categories: independent living needs assessment, academic support, post-secondary educational support, career preparation, employment programs or vocational training, budget and financial management, housing education and home management training, health education and risk prevention, family support and marriage education, mentoring, supervised independent living, room and board financial assistance, education financial assistance, and other financial assistance.

What outcomes are tracked?

The outcome measures below will be tracked. Each outcome contains data elements specific to that outcome. States will collect outcomes data by directly surveying youth in the baseline and follow-up populations. States must develop surveys using questions specified by ACF.

Outcome 1: Financial self-sufficiency

Outcome 4: Experience with homelessness

Outcome 2: Educational attainment

Outcome 5: High-risk behavior

Outcome 3: Positive connection with adults

Outcome 6: Access to health insurance

**National Youth in Transition Database
3 Activities – 2 Processes**

Process 1 - Served Population

- Agency/staff driven
- Capture services delivered during 6-month period
- Reported/finalized at end of each period (March/Sept)
- Data stored in county system for transmission to data contractor or use of <https://www.getnytdpa.org> web system

Process 2 – Baseline and Follow-up Populations

- Youth Responses
- Outcomes focused
- What do I know? How am I doing? What have I done?
- Baseline registering and reporting is time-sensitive
- Agency/staff identifies youth
- Youth input in <https://www.getnytdpa.org> web system

Timeline

Pennsylvania NYTD Data Collection & Reporting						
	Federal Submission Due Date	Reporting Period	Served Data (IL Services)	Baseline Survey (Age 17)	Follow-up Survey (Age 19)	Follow-up Survey (Age 21)
2019 A	May 15, 2019	Oct 1, 2018-Mar 31, 2019	✓.	*	✓.	Co-hort
2019 B	Nov 14, 2019	Apr 1, 2019-Sept 30, 2019	✓.	*	✓.	3
2020 A	May 15, 2020	Oct 1, 2019-Mar 31, 2020	✓.	✓.	Co-hort	
2020 B	Nov 14, 2020	Apr 1, 2020-Sept 30, 2020	✓.	✓.	4	
2021 A	May 15, 2021	Oct 1, 2020-Mar 31, 2021	✓.	*		✓.
2021 B	Nov 14, 2021	Apr 1, 2021-Sept 30, 2021	✓.	*		✓.
						3
2022 A	May 15, 2022	Oct 1, 2021-Mar 31, 2022	✓.	*	✓.	Co-hort
2022 B	Nov 14, 2022	Apr 1, 2022-Sept 30, 2022	✓.	*	✓.	4
2023 A	May 15, 2023	Oct 1, 2022-Mar 31, 2023	✓.	✓.	Co-hort	
2023 B	Nov 14, 2023	Apr 1, 2023-Sept 30, 2023	✓.	✓.	5	

2024 A	May 15, 2024	Oct 1, 2023-Mar 31, 2024	✓.	*		✓.	Co-hort
2024 B	Nov 14, 2024	Apr 1, 2024-Sept 30, 2024	✓.	*		✓.	4
2025 A	May 15, 2025	Oct 1, 2024-Mar 31, 2025	✓.	*	✓.	Co-hort	
2025 B	Nov 14, 2025	Apr 1, 2025-Sept 30, 2025	✓.	*	✓.	5	
2026 A	May 15, 2026	Oct 1, 2025-Mar 31, 2026	✓.	✓.	Co-hort		
2026 B	Nov 14, 2026	Apr 1, 2026-Sept 30, 2026	✓.	✓.	6		

(✓) Federal Submission (*) State Collection only

SAT Waivers

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/StaffResources.htm>

Fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Test are available for *current high school students* who cannot afford to pay the test fees. Please be sure to indicate on the SAT Waiver Request Form which test your youth wishes to take. SAT Waivers are available for students who are *currently* in high school. **If a youth already graduated or did not graduate, but received their GED, the College Board will not accept the fee waiver.** There are also a limited number of college application fee waivers. If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Sherri Krodel from the CWRC at slk114@pitt.edu.

Fee waivers are also available at high school guidance offices for the SAT and ACT. These are for low income and at-risk youth (IL youth would also qualify for these waivers as well).

Staff Resources

Life Skills

- Vital Documents

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources.htm>

Education

- Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/files/FosteringIndependenceTuitionWaiverProgramBrochureforStudents.pdf>

- PHEAA Student Aid Guide:

<http://www.pheaa.org/college-planning/student-aid-guide/pdf/student-aid-guide.pdf>

This guide is available in both English and Spanish and can be used by all individuals who are preparing for continuing education.

- Fostering Independence Through Education Waiver

<https://jlc.org/resources/fact-sheet-fostering-independence-through-education-waiver>

- Education Law Center

<https://www.elc-pa.org/>

- Foster Care Transition Toolkit, US Department of Education

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/youth-transition-toolkit.pdf>

- PHEAA

<https://www.pheaa.org/>

- Chafee Education and Training Grant Application

<https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>

- Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

<https://studentaid.gov/>

- Education Planner (PHEAA and Education Planner are partner websites offered in PA, which offer counselor, student, and parent sections and resources).
- My Smart Borrowing
- You Can Deal with It
- Making My Way Through College

Supportive Services

- County Assistance Office Contact Information

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/CAO-Contact.aspx>

Youth can also apply for and renew benefits from the comfort of their own home using [COMPASS](#), the online resource for cash assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) help with childcare, health care coverage, home heating assistance (LIHEAP), school meals, SelectPlan for Women, and long-term living services.

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Apply-for-Benefits.aspx>

- PA Women-Infants-Children (WIC)

<https://www.pawic.com/>

Employment

- Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

<http://www.dli.pa.gov/individuals/disability-services/ovr/pages/default.aspx>

- Job Corps

<https://www.jobcorps.gov/>

- Career Link

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act

[Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act](#)

- If, When, And How to Disclose to an Employer That You Have a Mental Health Disability

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj1-DisclosureFactSheet.pdf>

Housing

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

<https://www.hud.gov/>

Transition Planning

- Fosterclub Transition Toolkit

<https://www.fosterclub.com/foster-parent-training/course/using-fosterclub-transition-toolkit>

- Transition Planning for Youth with Disabilities – contact Juvenile Law Center

<https://jlc.org/resources/webinar-transition-planning-youth-physical-disabilities>

- Fostering Connections

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/federal/fosteringconnections/>

- Building Community Supports for Young People in the Transition Years

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/projPTTP-Community-Support-Tip-Sheet.pdf>

Advocacy/Leadership

- An Asset Builder’s Guide to Youth Leadership

[AB Guide to Youth Leadership](#)

Engagement

- “During Meetings I Can’t Stand It When....”

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj3-facilitator-guide-2013.pdf>

- AMP’s Top Ten Tips for Engaging with Young People

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj-5-AMP-top-ten-tips-for-engaging-young-people.pdf>

- Roger Hart’s Ladder of Youth Engagement

[Roger Hart’s Ladder of Youth Engagement](#)

Additional Resources

Juvenile Law Center

- Youth Fostering Change: Teen Success Agreement

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources.htm>

- Act 91: Pennsylvania's Law on Extending and Re-entering Foster Care

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources.htm>

- Juvenile Records: A Know Your Rights Guide for Youth in Pennsylvania

<https://jlc.org/resources/juvenile-records-know-your-rights-guide-youth-pennsylvania>

- Empowering Youth in Court

<https://jlc.org/youth-advocacy/youth-fostering-change-projects/empowering-youth-court>

- Know Your Rights

<https://jlc.org/resources/know-your-rights-guide-introduction>

Administrative Office of PA Courts

- State Roundtable Reports

<http://ocfcpacourts.us/childrens-roundtable-initiative/state-roundtable-workgroupscommittees/transitional-youth-workgroup/state-roundtable-reports/>

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network

- www.Diakon-Swan.org
- www.SWANtoolkit.org
- www.Adoptpakids.org



<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/>

The PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is comprised of current and former substitute care youth ages 16-21. Youth leaders on the YAB educate, advocate, and form partnerships to create positive change in the substitute care system. The YAB is funded by the PA Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families and is supported by the University of Pittsburgh, PA CWRC.

The YAB structure is youth-led, and staff supported. There are many benefits for youth who attend YAB meetings including the opportunity to give back through advocacy and community service. Youth learn facilitation and presentation skills that look excellent on a college application or job resumé as well as leadership and professional development skills. Many YAB alumni go on to have successful careers in social work or advocacy.

Mission: The mission of the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is to educate, advocate, and form partnerships to create positive change in the child welfare system.

Philosophy: YAB members are viewed as experts and meetings are youth-led and organized. Staff members are appointed to each Regional YAB in a support role to help youth find their voices and teach them about meeting facilitation, action planning, and other necessary skills.

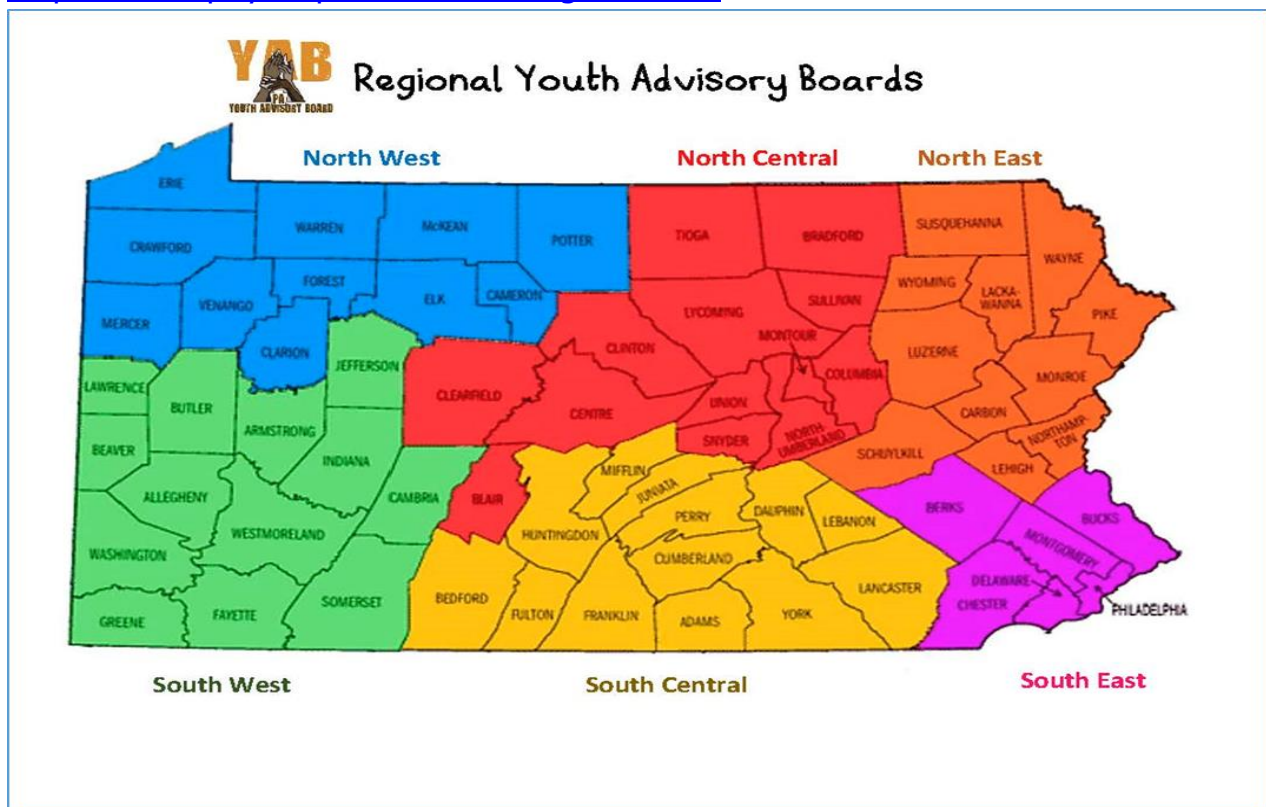
Membership: Youth and alumni of the child welfare system ages 16 to 21 are elected from regional boards as officers.

Structure: Local and Regional YABs funnel into the Statewide YAB. Each Regional YAB (6 regions) contact information for staff support is listed on map below.

Activities: Youth and alumni create positive change in the child welfare system by:

- Training caseworkers, administrators, foster parents, supervisors, judges, and guardian ad litem on issues of importance to older youth and alumni.
- Developing recommendations related to policies and procedures affecting youth in care.
- Organizing community service events.
- Engaging in peer-to-peer mentoring.

Meetings: Regional YABs and the Statewide YAB meet every other month. The meeting schedule for each region and the Statewide YAB are listed at <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/YABRegions.htm>.



YAB Coordinators' Contact Information

Northwest YAB:

Shannon Madigan
smadigan@fsnwpa.org

Southwest YAB:

Shayla Jones
shj93@pitt.edu

Northeast YAB:

Lindsey Glezen
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Phone: 570-241-5173

Southeast YAB:

Samantha Jackson
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Phone: 215-574-9194 x. 230

North Central YAB:

Shayla Jones
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South Central YAB:

Shayla Jones
shj93@pitt.edu

If you are interested in beginning a board or need additional support, please contact Meghan O'Hare meo43@pitt.edu, your Regional Consultant, or Practice Improvement Specialist. For additional information, you may also reference the YAB Welcome document:

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/files/2018WelcomeBinderFINAL.pdf>

Youth Trainings

The following trainings will assist youth in sharing their own story, educating others, and effectively recommending changes to the child welfare system. These trainings are available for local, regional, and statewide members. If you are interested in receiving any of the trainings below, please contact your Regional YAB Consultant, Cindy Gore lcg7@pitt.edu, or your Practice Improvement Specialist.

Know Your Rights Training

This interactive training provides youth in Pennsylvania with information about their legal rights in the substitute care system and how they can best advocate for themselves. Youth will learn how to use the “Know Your Rights” manual. This guide is presented in a question-and-answer format and covers many of the issues that are important to teenagers in care. It is also a valuable resource for individuals who work with youth in the foster care system.

<https://jlc.org/resources/know-your-rights-guide-introduction>

Know Your Rights Training Part II: How to Conduct Yourself in Court

This training prepares youth for attendance at court hearings. Youth will discuss what to wear, how to speak, and how to prepare themselves so that they will be ready for their court date.

Strategic Sharing

Sharing your story is one of the ways the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board advocates for positive change in the foster care system. This training is designed to teach youth how to share their personal story in a way that is meaningful, effective, and most importantly safe. ***This training is required in order for youth to participate in YAB panels or presentations.***

Time Management

Tips on how to manage your time as a busy young adult. Fight time bandits, color code your calendar, and learn how to meet your goals!

YAB 101: An Introduction to the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board

Engagement is a core component of Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Practice Model because it is important to youth for their voices to be heard and for them to work alongside professionals for positive change in the system. Setting up a youth advisory board for your agency or county is one way to offer this experience to your clients. This presentation by the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) offers an in-depth look into how to run and engage youth in a youth advisory board. Participants will hear from youth leaders and walk away with an understanding of YAB’s structure, policies, and practices.

The YAB Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms (DAF) and Normalcy Recommendations

The Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms and Normalcy (DAF) Recommendations and training was developed by the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to bring attention to the inconsistency of rules and policies regarding developmentally appropriate freedoms and normalcy for youth in care. This training provides information to participants about the youth recommendations outlined in the DAF recommendations and how they can be implemented with older youth resources already in existence, like *The Teen Success Agreement* and *The Know Your Rights Manual*.

<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources.htm>

An Introduction to Advocacy

There are a lot of ways to get your voice heard in advocacy. This training will fill your advocacy toolbox, allow youth to practice skills, and find how your individuality and talents can help support the causes you are interested in!

YAB Resources

- Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms and Normalcy Recommendations
<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources.htm>
- YAB Website
<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/default.htm>
- Affordable Health Care Act (ACA)
<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/files/ACAFlyer.pdf>
- Youth Questionnaire
<http://forms.cwrc.pitt.edu/youthquestionnaire/>
- Top 10 Tips
<http://www.payab.pitt.edu/Top10Tips.htm>