



Children's Justice & Advocacy Report

To promote community responsibility so every Pennsylvania child is protected from child abuse, including sexual abuse.

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Countdown to December 31st and PA's New Approach to Protecting Children

Long awaited changes to Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), some of which were enacted exactly a year ago, take effect on December 31st.

These significant changes impact how Pennsylvania defines and reports child abuse.

Throughout the last year, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has convened multidisciplinary experts to guide the implementation of the CPSL changes. Leaders from DHS' Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) offered a status update to the CPSL Implementation Team this week:

- **Keep Kids Safe Campaign** (www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov) – PA law now requires DHS to make information [To keep reading, become a subscriber.](#)

Getting to Clarity on Volunteers and Background Checks

The child protection change generating some of the biggest buzz and confusion relates to background checks for volunteers. Included in today's CJAR is a chart outlining the requirements.

In a Lancaster News editorial this week ([Wolf must follow through to prevent child abuse in Pa.](#)), Governor-elect Wolf was urged to exercise leadership on protecting PA's children. This media outlet, along with many others, are writing about the comprehensive background check requirements that go into effect in 2015. Virtually every story cites confusion about what is required.

Indeed this week's editorial stressed, "Leadership is needed to dispel the confusion over the new law's requirement of background checks for volunteers."

OCYF leaders underscored they have been consistently communicating with leaders in the PA House of Representatives and Senate [To keep reading, become a subscriber.](#)

Uptick in Funding for Victim Services and Pursuit of a "Permanent Fix" to the Cap

This week President Obama signed legislation to keep the federal government open for business (H.R.83 - Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act).

Woven into the massive federal spending bill was a big victory in the fight against child abuse and to assure that victims of crime have access to critical intervention and treatment services.

The funding disbursed from The Crime Victims Fund (The Fund) will grow from \$745 million to \$2.36 billion in FY 2015.

Bipartisan lawmakers, including [United States Senators Pat Toomey](#) (R-PA) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), celebrated the victory calling it a “step in the right direction.” Lawmakers also vowed to work toward a “permanent fix”
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