



County representatives and judges from the Family Engagement Initiative

AOPC produces community-outreach campaign to help strengthen children, families and communities

Over the past few months, the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) worked closely with AOPC/Communications to create a community-outreach campaign – *Families are Worth it*.

The campaign highlights the significant role family, close friends and community members play in helping children in the child welfare system grow up healthy and happy. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage community members to work alongside child welfare agencies and courts to support families.

Child welfare professionals, judges and lawyers recognize the benefits of

keeping kids safely in their own homes, neighborhoods, schools and places of worship. Focusing on the well-being of the child as well as the entire family is incredibly important in providing the tools children and families need to facilitate success.

As part of the campaign, 11 counties in Pennsylvania currently participating in The Family Engagement Initiative will use a customized video and poster to encourage community involvement – because communities help strengthen families and families help strengthen communities.

The video encourages anyone living or working in each of the 11 counties

to volunteer their time, be a mentor or support families in need by lending a helping hand with their skills and services.

At this time, participating counties include Beaver, Blair, Butler, Clinton, Fayette, Lackawanna, Northampton, Snyder, Tioga, Union and Venango.

“These counties are a part of a special initiative that furthers collaborative efforts between the judiciary and the child welfare agency to enhance meaningful family involvement in the child welfare system,” said **Sandy Moore**, director of OCFC.

Visit www.ocfcpacourts.us to watch the video. **AOPC**

How much money has AOPC intercepted from lottery prizes?

Last year, *AOPCConnected* reported on a new law, known as the Lottery Intercept, that took effect in October 2018 requiring the Pennsylvania Lottery to first check with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) for any outstanding court judgements before awarding any winnings over \$2,500.

As a result of the lottery intercept process, the AOPC has intercepted

more than \$363,000 on 178 cases statewide between December 2018 and September 2019.

During the reporting timeframe, court-ordered obligations were found to exist for 105 people. The AOPC reported the total amount owed to the courts by notifying the Department of Revenue, which was then deducted from the prize amount and used to satisfy those obligations.

You may recall that all Pennsylvania Lottery winnings over \$2,500 were already subject to intercept by the Department of Human Services for child support obligations. The law that took effect last year added two more department checks to that process including the Department of Revenue for outstanding tax obligations and of course, the AOPC. **AOPC**