

Available Benefits & Services

Kinship families may be eligible for child welfare services, including case management, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, preventative services, childcare and other programs.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Informal kinship families may apply for the TANF program. Kinship caregivers have the option of applying for a child-only grant on behalf of the child or youth in their care or they may apply to become part of the grant.

Medicaid

The public health insurance plan may be available to assist with the costs of health care. Individuals can apply for Medicaid.

For any of the above services, please contact your local department of social services.

Child Support

Parents are legally responsible for supporting their children or youth. The Department of Child Support Enforcement ensures this occurs by establishing and enforcing financial orders for parents to provide monthly support for their children or youth who are not residing with them. Contact Department of Child Support Enforcement at 1-800-468-8894.

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COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Kinship Care

Kinship Navigator Program



Providing guidance to kinship families and the children in their care

What are kinship navigator programs?

More than 2.5 million children currently are being raised by their grandparents and other relatives, both formally through the child welfare system and informally through private family arrangements. When these caregivers take on this responsibility, they often receive little to no financial support or advice regarding how to navigate the many systems they might need to access to meet the needs of the children in their care. While some child protection agencies are shifting toward a “kin first” culture and practice that prioritizes supporting kin caregivers, many still get lost in the competing demands of workers. Kinship navigator programs help fill that gap by providing caregivers with information, education, and referrals to a wide range of services and supports. The Navigator’s goal is to maximize the caregivers’ ability to provide safety and stability and, if needed, permanency for the children placed in their home. (The Casey Foundation)



Who are Kinship Caregivers?

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment (Child Welfare League of America).



Why Kinship Care is Needed.

Children may be unable to live with their parents because of...

- Parental substance abuse
- Financial hardships
- Death of a parent
- Incarceration
- Domestic violence
- Mental health issues
- Parental abandonment
- Child neglect and/or abuse
- Teenager not ready to be a parent
- Military deployment

(The Children’s Home Society)

Why is Kinship Care Preferable?

- Children live with people they know and trust
- Kinship care supports family preservation
- Children keep their family identity
- Lessens the feeling of separation and loss
- Kinship is strength based, not limitation based
- Kinship care supports community and culture

What do kinship navigator programs provide?

- Information
- Education
- Resources and referrals for relatives, grandparents, kin, foster parents, and adoptive families.
- Short term case management
- Linkage to community services and resources



Program Goals

- Protect Children and Strengthen & Families
- Provide comprehensive assessment of adults, families, and children designed to enhance strengths and address challenges
- Support and enhance relationships between children, families, and the community
- Connect children & families to immediate, time-limited, and lifelong supports
- All partners work together as part of a professional team