

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



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Profile of a grandparent raising a grandchild in Massachusetts

Grandparents raising grandchildren over the age of 60 has been on the rise since 2010:

2010= 11,000

2013=13,500

2017= 14,500



- **49% of grandparents raising grandchildren age 60+ years old are doing so for 5 or more years**

* American Community Survey 2010-2017

Grandchildren Raised by Grandparents in Ma.



- 36,000 children being raised by Grandparents in Massachusetts without a parent present
- 2,762 children raised by kin in foster care

*For every **1** child raised by by kin in foster care, there are **12** being raised by kin outside of foster care*

A little more data (because data is so fun!)

• In a study conducted by UMass Medical in 2019, 414 GRGs participated in a survey. This is what they had to say:

- 45 % were raising children 10-18 years old
- 80% reported that one or both parents struggled with addiction.
- Of these, 68% reported opioid use by one or both parents
- 84% reported that children were on Masshealth
- 53% reported that their grandchild received special education services
- Over 55% reported their grandchild was a trauma survivor.



Introducing



Commission Facts



When was the Commission established?

- **On July 8, 2008, the Child Advocate bill was signed into law which included the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (Section 1 of Chapter 176, the Acts of 2008 M.G.L. Chapter 3, section 69).**
- **This legislation calls for a permanent commission on the status of grandparents raising grandchildren which consists of 15 individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to grandparents.**

Who determines Commission membership?

- 2 persons from the Governor's Office
- 1 person from the Attorney General's Office
- 2 persons by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be a member of the House.
- 1 person from the House Minority Leader
- 2 persons from the President of the Senate, one of whom shall be a member of the Senate
- 1 person by the Senate Minority Leader
- 3 persons by the Secretary of Elder Affairs, one of whom shall be from the Secretary's Office
- 1 person from the Commissioner of DCF who shall be from the Department
- 1 person from the Chief Justice of the Probate and Family Court
- 1 person from the Chief Justice of the Juvenile Court

Commission Purpose and Responsibilities



The purpose of this Commission is to be a resource to the Commonwealth on issues affecting grandparents raising grandchildren, and relatives, other than parents, raising kin.

The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- 1. Foster unity** - Foster unity among grandparents raising grandchildren and community support organizations by promoting cooperation, sharing information, and encouraging collaboration and joint activities.
- 2. Serve** - Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups with regards to matters of unique interest and concern to grandparents raising grandchildren in the Commonwealth.
- 3. Programs** - Assess program and practices in all state agencies as they affect grandparents raising grandchildren.

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The Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

4. **Advise** - Advise executive and legislative bodies of the potential effect of proposed legislation on grandparents raising grandchildren.
5. **Investigate** - Investigate the merits of a state agency dedicated to grandparents' issues and determine how the agency would be set up.
6. **Identify** - Identify issues that are faced by relatives, other than parents, raising kin.

**So....
what does the
Commission do?**



Host Community /Virtual Workshops



Workshop Topics:

- **Helping Children Cope with Grief and Loss**
- **Preparing for Your Grandchild's Legal Future**
 - **Understanding Trauma**
 - **Internet Safety**
- **Taking Care of the Caregiver**



Legislative and Policy Advocacy

- Legislative Listening Sessions
- Policy Advocacy with Agency Partners to improve access to resources such as child care
- Legislation proposed to improve services such as access to legal services

Annual Conference for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Service Providers





Work with GRG Support Groups

- Offer Trainings to start GRG Support Groups
- Host Monthly GRG Facilitator Meetings
- Provide Support/Scholarships to GRG Groups

Provide one on one support and assistance to grandparents and providers with access to services and resources, support groups, and more.





www.massgrg.com

Provides online resources
and information through our
website
and e-newsletters



THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
GRANDPARENTS
R A I S I N G
GRANDCHILDREN

Advisory Board

The mission of the Advisory Board is to provide input, feedback, and support to the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

How the Commission gets it all done:

- Support Group Sub-Committee:
Deb Dowd-Foley, Chair
- Legal and Advocacy Sub-Committee:
Lynn Girton, Chair
- Information and Outreach Sub-
Committee: Vacant
- Resource Development Sub-
Committee: Ilene Mitchell, Chair

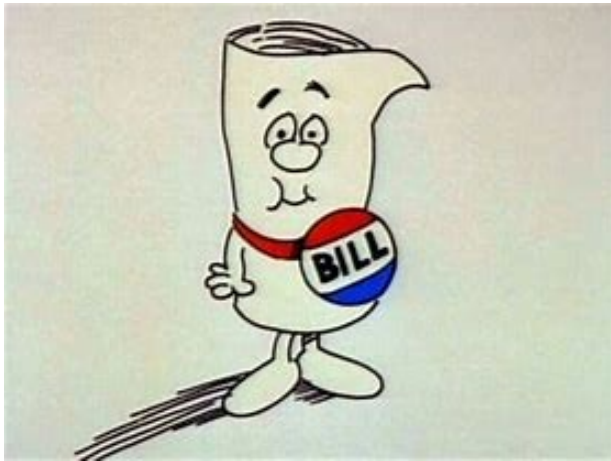




The Support Group Sub-Committee

- Supports over 50+ GRG support groups throughout the state
- Hosts monthly meetings with GRG support group facilitators
- Provides trainings for starting a GRG support group
- Plans the annual conference

Legal and Advocacy Sub-Committee



- Identifies needed legal issues or policy issues impacting grandparents/relative caregivers
- Files/supports legislation in support of kinship caregivers
- Organizes legal resources
- Provides presentations on legal services

Examples of Advocacy Projects:

Current Project:

- Equal Access to Free College and Tuition Waiver for Children Raised by Kin

Past Projects:

- Child support enforcement waivers for guardians applying for TAFDC child-only grant (good-cause waiver)
- Child care vouchers for working guardians who receive the TAFDC child-only grant



Information and Outreach Sub-Committee

- Reviews and updates the website
- Helps write the e-newsletters
- Assists with outreach efforts throughout the state
- Creates and updates Tip Sheet Series packet and other helpful documents and assists with distribution strategy



How Business Gets Done:

The Commission follows Open Meeting Laws of Massachusetts.

Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public.

Each Commissioner has a vote.

*Only Commissioners can vote. The staff, general public, and Advisory Board members can not vote, however, they can and should attend meetings, if able to do so.



Community Partners



Massachusetts
Councils On Aging





The Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
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