

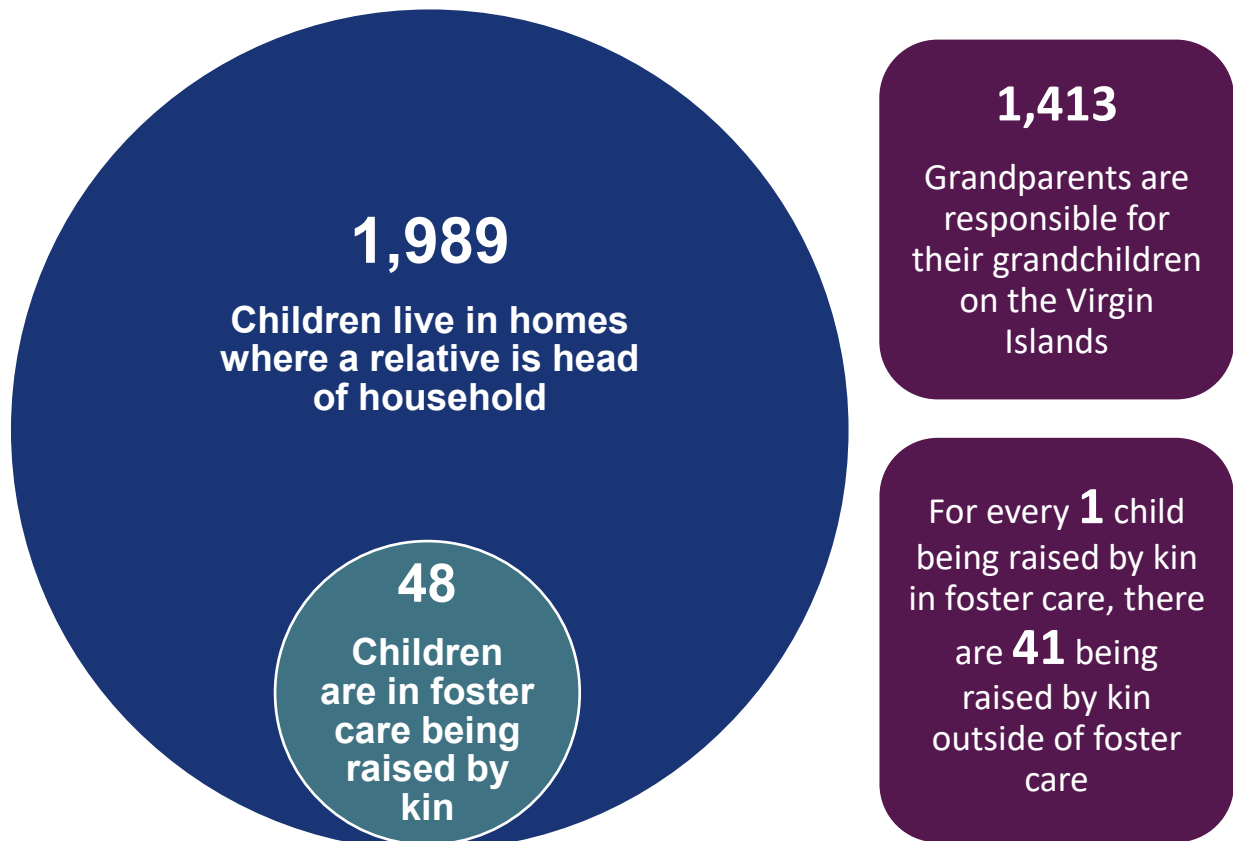
# GRANDFACTS

## FACT SHEETS FOR KINSHIP/GRANDFAMILIES

The GrandFacts State and Territory Fact Sheets for Kinship/Grandfamilies include location-specific data and programs, as well as information about public benefits, educational assistance, legal relationship options, and laws. To find all GrandFacts State and Territory Facts Sheets, visit [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org).

## United States Virgin Islands

### Kinship/Grandfamilies Data



The data presented in these graphics is from the [United States Census Bureau](#), the [Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center](#), and the [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#). For more information, click on the links in the following table.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Data on <a href="#">children on the Virgin Islands living in homes where relatives are head of household</a> | National data on <a href="#">children living in homes where relatives are head of household</a> |
| Data on children on the Virgin Islands being raised by kin with no parents present is not available          | National data on <a href="#">children being raised by kin with no parents present</a>           |
| Data on <a href="#">children in foster care on the Virgin Islands being raised by kin</a>                    | National data on <a href="#">children in foster care being raised by kin</a>                    |
| Data on <a href="#">grandparents on the Virgin Islands responsible for their grandchildren</a>               | National data on <a href="#">grandparents responsible for their grandchildren</a>               |

For more information on kinship care and caregivers, and for detailed instructions on accessing and interpreting this data, please visit <https://GKSNetwork.org>.

## Programs That May Help

Local programs that provide support, resources, and assistance to kinship/grandfamilies can often be found by contacting your local school, area agency on aging, community center, faith-based organization, or children’s services office.

### Key Programs on the Virgin Islands

#### Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands

- Website:** <https://lssvi.org/>
- Phone:** 340-772-4099
- Email:** [info@lssvi.org](mailto:info@lssvi.org)
- Service Area:** Island-wide
- Description:** Support groups, tutoring, parenting skills development programming, developmental and physical disabilities services

#### Virgin Islands Department of Human Services

- Website:** <http://dhs.gov.vi>
- Phone:** 340-774-0930

**Email:** [dhsusvi@gmail.com](mailto:dhsusvi@gmail.com)

**Service Area:** Island-wide

**Description:** Family assistance programs, childcare and regulatory services, intake and emergency services

### **Virgin Islands Senior Citizens Affairs Administration**

**Website:** [http://www.dhs.gov.vi/seniors/Info\\_Referral.html](http://www.dhs.gov.vi/seniors/Info_Referral.html)

**Phone:** 340-772-9811

**Email:** [dhssca@yahoo.com](mailto:dhssca@yahoo.com)

**Service Area:** Island-wide

**Description:** Concrete goods, meals, respite, community and social events

## **Public Benefits**

Federal, state, and territorial public benefits programs can help with income, food, health care, home energy, telephone, and other needs for those who are eligible. Eligibility requirements vary with each public benefit and sometimes are different from state to state and territory to territory. Some benefits are for the family and others are for children or older adults individually. Children are often eligible for public benefits even if their caregivers do not have guardianship or legal custody. Kin/grandfamily caregivers may become eligible for benefits programs when their household size increases.

### **Help with Public Benefits**

#### **BenefitsCheckUp**

BenefitsCheckUp, powered by the National Council on Aging, offers a free and private way to complete a questionnaire to find out if older adults and people with disabilities qualify for certain programs that pay for food, increase income, and cover home and health care costs. The specific programs covered by the questionnaire on the website are listed on the next page. Once the questionnaire is completed, the website generates a list of eligible programs and contact information. BenefitsCheckUp does not currently connect individuals to programs for grandparents raising their grandchildren, but their [Frequently Asked Questions page](#) includes links to websites for the [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#), the [State Children's Health Insurance Program \(SCHIP\)](#), [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF, Child Only Grant\)](#), and [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) for Children](#).

**Website:** <https://benefitscheckup.org/>

**BenefitsCheckUp**  
**State, Territory, and Federal Public Benefits**

- Medicare Savings Programs
- Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
- Medicare Rx Extra Help
- State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs (SPAP)
- Medicaid for Aged, Blind, and Disabled
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- State Property Tax Relief/Rebates
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Employment Programs
- Telephone and Cellphone Assistance
- Transportation Assistance

**Benefits.gov**

An official website of the federal government, this resource has state- and territory-specific information on benefits, in addition to a screening tool to find out which programs you may be eligible to receive.

**Website:** [www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov)

**Eldercare Locator**

The Virgin Islands offers services for seniors through its Senior Citizens Affairs Administration (see contact information above). You can use the National Eldercare Locator service to discover what exists in states throughout the U.S.

**Phone:** 1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)

**Website:** [eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx](http://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx)

**Key Public Benefits: Income**

Each state and territory administers federal funds that provide cash assistance to families in need. Some states and territories also offer other forms of financial assistance.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

Cash assistance may be available to eligible children and their kin/grandfamily caregivers. There are two types of TANF grants: child-only and family grants. In virtually all states and territories, caregiver income is not considered in determining eligibility for TANF child-only grants. TANF child-only grants are based solely on the income of the

child and are designed to help meet the needs of just the child. Unlike TANF family grants, child-only grants are not subject to time limits or work requirements.

**Phone:** 340-774-0930

**Website:** [http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial\\_programs/TANF.html](http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial_programs/TANF.html)

**To access the application form online, go to**

[http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial\\_programs/documents/SNAPCashApplication-ENGLISH\\_Updated\\_005.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial_programs/documents/SNAPCashApplication-ENGLISH_Updated_005.pdf)

### **Generations United's Grand Resources: TANF**

**A Fact Sheet for Grandparent and Relative Caregivers to Help Access Support through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program**

### **Social Security**

A multigenerational program, Social Security provides income benefits to adults, older adults, and children. In addition to [Retirement](#) and [Disability](#) benefits, there is a program that provides [Survivors Benefits](#). If a child's parent is deceased, Survivors Benefits may be available based on the child's parent's earnings. Your grandchild (not other kin children) may also qualify for benefits based on your work record. The [Supplemental Security Income](#) (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled [adults](#) and [children](#) who have limited income and resources. SSI benefits are also payable to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits. Residents of the Virgin Islands are not eligible for SSI.

To find your local Social Security Administration office, visit the [Office Locator](#).

**Phone:** 1-800-772-1213 (toll-free)

**Website:** <https://www.ssa.gov/>

### **Key Public Benefits: Nutrition**

Kin/grandfamily caregivers and their families may be eligible for assistance with groceries, meals, infant formula, and nutrition education. These are some of the key nutrition benefits programs and resources.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

SNAP is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. It helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need for good health. For more information on SNAP and kinship/grandfamilies, please see [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Kinship/Grandfamilies](#).

### **Virgin Islands SNAP**

**Website:** [http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial\\_programs/food\\_stamp.html](http://www.dhs.gov.vi/financial_programs/food_stamp.html)

**Phone:** 340-774-2399

To access the application form online, go to

[http://www.dhs.gov/vi/financial\\_programs/documents/SNAPCashApplication-ENGLISH\\_Updated\\_005.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/vi/financial_programs/documents/SNAPCashApplication-ENGLISH_Updated_005.pdf)

### **Food and Nutrition Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** **Child Nutrition Programs**

The schools, early childhood education programs, child care centers, afterschool programs, and other programs that children attend may offer free or reduced-price meals through the federal Child Nutrition Programs, which provide breakfast, lunch, snacks, summer meals, and milk. Contact the school, center, or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and how to apply. Kin/grandfamily caregivers should inform the program that they are raising the child and share whether or not they are doing so through a court order.

**Website:** [https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts?f%5B0%5D=fns\\_contact\\_state%3A280](https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts?f%5B0%5D=fns_contact_state%3A280)

### **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

States and territories administer federal funds for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and for infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

**Website:** [https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts?f%5B0%5D=fns\\_contact\\_state%3A280](https://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-contacts?f%5B0%5D=fns_contact_state%3A280)

### **Foodbanks**

Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers, to families in need.

#### **GracesList Virgin Islands**

Find local foodbanks in your area:

<https://virgin.graceslist.org/directory/categories/meals>

### **Key Public Benefits: Health Care**

Kin/grandfamily caregivers and the children they are raising may be eligible for health insurance through Medicare and/or Medicaid, and they may also be eligible for help with prescription drugs.

### **Health Insurance for Children**

Kin/grandfamily caregivers may apply for free or low-cost health and dental insurance for the children they are raising through the Children's Health Insurance Program

(CHIP), which provides health coverage to eligible children through Medicaid. CHIP and Medicaid are the national names, and the Virgin Islands may use different names.

### **Key Public Benefits: Tax Credits**

Bona fide residents of the Virgin Islands should file taxes with the Virgin Islands, rather than filing with the federal government. Virgin Islanders are not eligible for all U.S. tax credits, but there may be comparable credits in the Virgin Islands tax system. Contact the [U.S. Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue](#) for more information.

## **Education**

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) offers a [parent site](#) that has a wide range of helpful information for parents **and** caregivers regarding children’s education from early childhood through college, special needs, disabilities, language challenges, and gifted students.

**Phone:** 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (toll-free)

**Website:** [www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents)

### [Virgin Islands Department of Education](#)

**St. Croix:** 340-778-1095

**St. Thomas:** 340-774-0100

**Website:** <https://vide.vi/>

### **Educational Enrollment**

Kin/grandfamily caregivers can contact their local school district’s administrative office or their local school to find out how to register the child and what paperwork is needed. Caregivers may need birth records, health records, or previous school records. Some states have laws that allow kin/grandfamily caregivers without legal custody or guardianship to enroll the children they are raising in school. These laws are often called education “consent” laws, but they may be called something else in your state or territory. The Virgin Islands does not appear to have such a law; check the [Grandfamilies.org Online Database](#) to see if a state you may be interested in has such a law.

To learn more about educational enrollment on the Virgin Islands, send an email to the address that corresponds with your school district:

**STT/STJ District:** [sttregistration@vide.vi](mailto:sttregistration@vide.vi)

**STX District:** [student.services@stx.k12.vi](mailto:student.services@stx.k12.vi)



## **Early Intervention, Special Education, and Related Services**

### **The Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

From birth to age 21, children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or other special needs may be able to get early intervention, preschool, and special education services in school through the federal IDEA. Services may include speech, physical, and occupational therapies.

The IDEA requires that states and territories identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who may need special education and related services and who are between the ages of 3 and 21. Once the evaluation team, which includes a child's caregivers, has decided if a child is eligible for early intervention, preschool, or special education services, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP; birth to three years of age) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP; 3 to 21 years of age) is developed and services should begin shortly.

### **Virgin Islands Department of Education, Office of Special Education**

**St. Croix Phone:** 340-773-1095 ext. 7087 or 7069

**St. Thomas Phone:** 340-774-0100 ext. 8800

**Website:** <https://vide.vi/our-divisions/special-education/>

Find your school district's Special Education Director: <https://vide.vi/our-divisions/special-education/#contact-us>

**Parent Centers** across the country provide information to help parents *and* caregivers with children who have special education needs and disabilities.

[Disability Rights of the Virgin Islands](#) is the parent center for the Virgin Islands.

[Generations United's Grand Resources: A Grandparent's and Other Relative's Guide to Raising Children with Disabilities](#)

## **Early Childhood Education**

**Head Start** and **Early Head Start** are early education programs for eligible children.

To find Head Start or Early Head Start centers in your area, visit the [online directory](#) or call 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free).

### **Virgin Islands DHS- Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services**

Find child care, Child Care Assistance Programs, Family Support Programs, Head Start/Early Head Start Programs, and information on social-emotional development and early childhood mental health consultation online through the Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services.

**Website:** <http://www.dhs.gov.vi/OCCRS/index.html>



[Child Care Aware](#) provides information, resources, and connection to local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) that help you find local child care.

## Legal

The following legal relationships may be options for both those children exiting the foster care system and those outside the system. For those families who do not want to establish a legal relationship, consent and power of attorney laws may be available.

All of the following options are presented in general terms. This area of the law is created at the state and territorial level, so how these options are defined and which ones are available can vary significantly.

### Adoption

With adoption, the kin/grandfamily caregiver becomes the parent in the eyes of the law. This fact makes access to services on behalf of the child the same as for any parent. Adoption ends all of the birth parents' rights and responsibilities, which means that birth parents cannot go to court later and reclaim those rights and responsibilities. At the time of this document's creation, there is no information available on **adoption assistance** on the Virgin Islands.

### Guardianship

The biggest difference between adoption and guardianship is that guardianship does not take away all the birth parents' rights and responsibilities. Parents typically keep certain rights and the obligation to financially support the child. Unlike adoption, the parents can go back to court and ask for the guardianship to be ended. For caregivers, guardianship allows access to services on behalf of the child that otherwise might prove impossible while not changing family relationships, like making grandma legally mom.

[Guardianship assistance](#) payments may be available to kin/grandfamily caregivers who choose to get guardianship of the children in their care who are exiting the child welfare system. The Virgin Islands has an approved Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program.

### Comparing Adoption and Guardianship

This [chart](#), created by Generations United with support from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, is designed to help kinship foster parents compare adoption and guardianship as two options that you and the children in your care can pursue to exit foster care and create permanent families.

### Legal Custody

Legal custody is similar to guardianship, but it is usually granted by a different court that has different procedures.

## Other Options

Some places have laws that allow kin/grandfamily caregivers who do not want or have a legal relationship to the children in their care to access health care treatment and educational services on behalf of the children without going to court.

For more information on all these options, and to see what exists in different states in the U.S., see [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org).

## State Laws

[Grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org) is a collaboration between [Generations United](#), the [American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law](#), and [Casey Family Programs](#). It contains an easy-to-use, searchable [database](#) of state laws and legislation directly impacting kinship/grandfamilies. As of fall 2022, laws from the Virgin Islands and other territories are not available on the website. Nevertheless, you will find explanations of legal topic areas, practical implementation ideas, and many other resources.

Topics Covered:

- ▶ Adoption
- ▶ Care & Custody
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Federal Laws
- ▶ Financial Assistance
- ▶ Kinship Foster Care & Licensing
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Kinship Navigator Programs
- ▶ National Family Caregiver Support Program
- ▶ Notification & Engagement Of Relatives
- ▶ Guardianship Assistance

The online database of laws and legislation is at [www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Search-Laws).

## Updates

If you have an update or a resource to be included in this or any of the other GrandFacts State and Territory Fact Sheets, please email [info@GKSNetwork.org](mailto:info@GKSNetwork.org).

This fact sheet complements a series of state and District of Columbia fact sheets, which is available in its entirety at [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org)

**Caveats:** The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center (Network) has not assessed or evaluated the listed programs for their responsiveness or effectiveness. The programs are included solely based on their own claim that they provide services or supports to kinship/grandfamilies. Omission of any relevant program is not intentional. We welcome feedback and updates via email to [info@GKSNetwork.org](mailto:info@GKSNetwork.org).

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The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center (Network) helps government agencies and nonprofits in states, tribes, and territories work across jurisdictional and systemic boundaries to improve supports and services for families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so. For more information, please visit <https://GKSNetwork.org>.

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