GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK
A National Technical Assistance Center

USAging Leaders in Aging Well at Home

Aging Network Services and Supports for Kin/Grandfamily Caregivers

This fact sheet is for professionals working within the array of government systems and nonprofit organizations that support (or want to support) kinship/grandfamilies. It highlights services that the Aging Network commonly offers, which could benefit the families you serve, and offers tips for partnering with the Aging Network.

Introduction to Kinship Families & Grandfamilies

Kinship families, also known as grandfamilies, are families in which grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends are raising children whose parents are unable to do so.

While many kin/grandfamily caregivers experience great satisfaction and pride in taking on this important role, doing so can also be stressful and bring about challenges. About 50 percent of grandparent caregivers are age 60 or older and about 45 percent are no longer in the work force.[1] These retired and older caregivers likely experience financial strain, challenges in making their homes child-friendly, and feelings of social isolation from their peers who are no longer raising children.

About the Aging Network

The Aging Network is composed of federal, state, and local agencies and organizations that were established as part of the Older Americans Act. At the local level, the Aging Network is comprised of 614 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs, pronounced “triple As”) and more than 270 Title VI Native American Aging Programs (Title VI programs), as well as more than 20,000 local provider organizations. AAAs and Title VI programs serve every community across the nation, providing a range of services to support older

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, “Table S1002 – Grandparents: 2023: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables,” Accessed December 2024, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1002?q=S1002:%20Grandparents.

adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers, including adults who are age 55 and older who are raising their grandchildren or other relative children.

All AAAs offer a range of core services, including nutrition services, health and wellness programs, caregiver supports, elder rights/legal assistance, and supportive services. Additionally, many AAAs and Title VI programs offer services specifically for kinship/grandfamilies.

Resources

Learn more from USAging about AAAs and Title VI programs

Check out the top 10 services offered by Title VI Native American Aging programs

Services and Supports for Kin/Grandfamily Caregivers

The list below highlights services commonly available through the Aging Network that can help to support the needs of kin/grandfamily caregivers and children.

- **Information and Assistance –** AAAs and most Title VI programs offer these services, which can help kin/grandfamily caregivers connect with local supports. Kinship navigator programs (some run by AAAs) also help kin/grandfamily caregivers link to services.
- **Caregiver Support –** With funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program and the Native American Caregiver Support Program, many AAAs and Title VI programs offer services for caregivers, including kin/grandfamily caregivers. Common services include support groups, trainings, and respite.
- **In-Home Supportive Services –** All AAAs and many Title VI programs provide in-home services, such as assistance with chores and personal care.
- **Housing Assistance –** AAAs provide or connect older adults and caregivers to local community partners who offer a range of housing, home modification, or repair services.
- **Meal Programs –** The Aging Network's senior nutrition program offers older adults – including some kin/grandfamily caregivers – meals and socialization opportunities.
- **Telephone Reassurance –** The majority of Title VI programs and AAAs provide telephone reassurance and/or friendly visitors to older adults, helping to reduce isolation and loneliness.

- **Health and Wellness Programs –** The majority of AAAs and Title VI programs offer evidence-based chronic disease self-management classes.
- **Transportation –** AAAs and Title VI programs offer transportation to older adults or provide information about local transportation options.

To find AAAs and Title VI programs in the communities where you work, contact the Eldercare Locator, a federally funded public service, at (800) 677-1116, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET or visit eldercare.acl.gov.

Partner with the Aging Network

There are many ways in which professionals and organizations can partner with the Aging Network. Every two to four years, AAAs consult with their communities to create Area Plans on Aging, which set priorities for how AAAs will support older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers in their communities in the coming years. Title VI programs engage in a similar planning process. Each AAA also receives continual feedback on their services from an advisory council consisting of community members, including older adults receiving services from the AAA, family caregivers, and local service providers.

To engage with these forums, contact your local AAA or Title VI Program. Subscribe to their newsletters or follow them on social media to learn about their latest events and services. Offer to present information on your work and collaboration opportunities to the AAA's advisory council. Additionally, some AAA and Title VI program websites include further information on partnership opportunities, contracting to provide services, and advocacy efforts.

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 www.GKSNetwork.org.

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