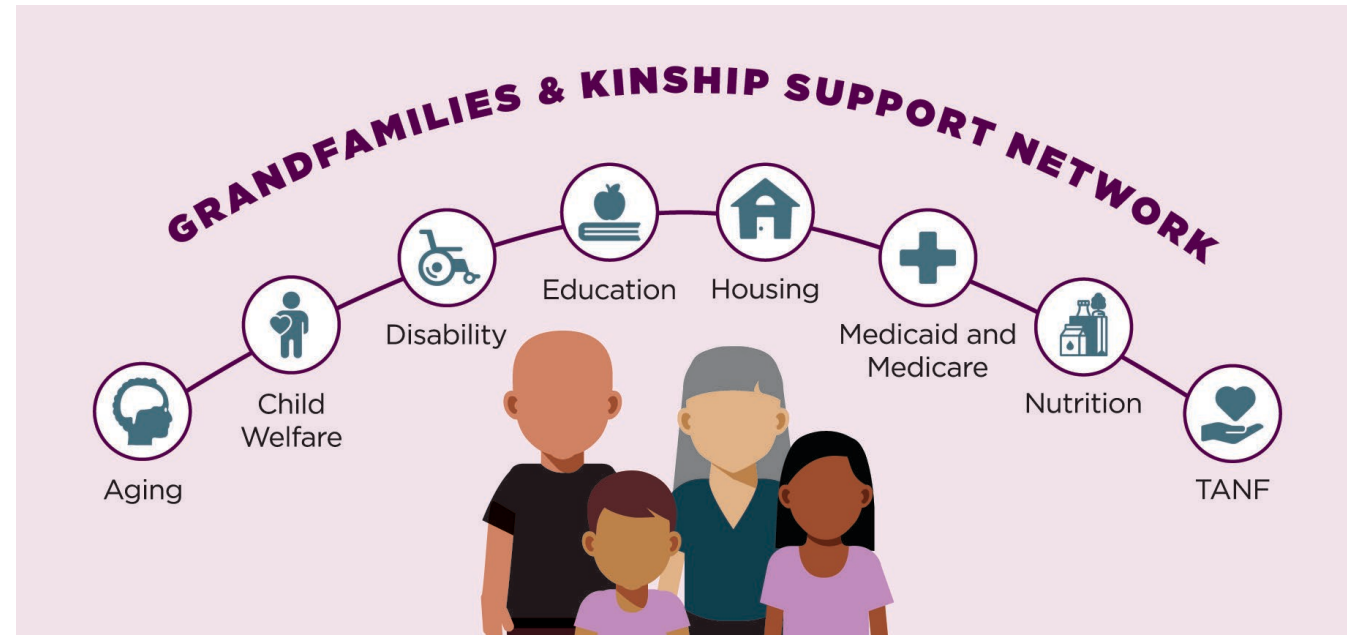


# Unaccompanied Immigrant Children in Kinship Families

**January 18, 2024**

- We will begin at the top of the hour
- Please type in the **chat** - your name, state, tribe (if applicable), and role
- We'll take questions throughout the presentation and at the end
- All participants will receive a link to the slides and recording by the end of the week

- 5-year (2021-2026) cooperative agreement with Administration for Community Living
- Purpose is to provide technical assistance to the array of tribal, state, and territorial government agencies, as well as non-profit organizations that serve kinship families
- Not designed to serve the families directly – working to improve systems for families



# How We Help



## Learning Collaboratives and Information Dissemination

The Network hosts [webinars](#) and facilitates learning collaboratives.



## Targeted, Specialized Support

The Network's **Bridging Systems for Kinship Families** initiative will provide select jurisdictions with in-depth support to improve collaboration across government systems and nonprofit services providers, address service barriers, and leverage resources to maximize support of all kinship families.

[Apply](#) by January 30.



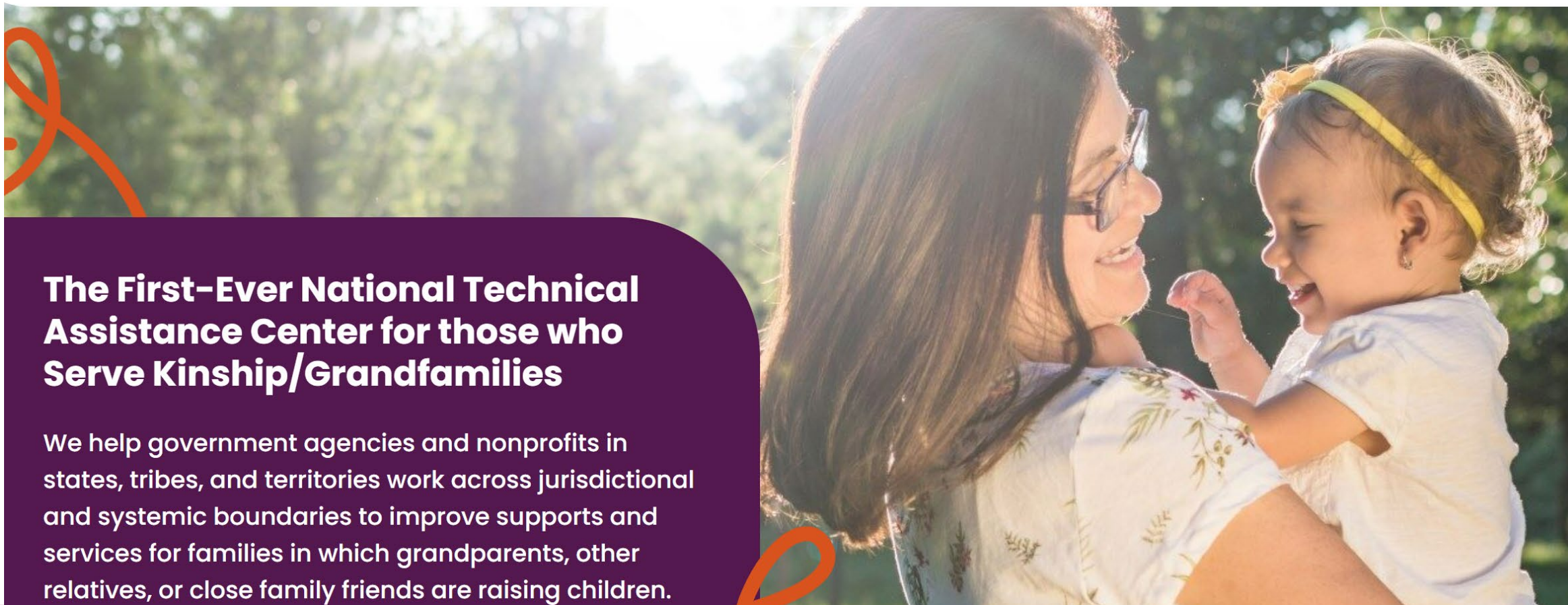
## Individual Assistance

We respond to [individual requests for help](#) from government agencies, kinship navigators, and community-based nonprofits.



## A Centralized Hub

The Network is elevating exemplary kinship/grandfamily practices and programs from around the country on its accessible website, [www.GKSNetwork.org](http://www.GKSNetwork.org).



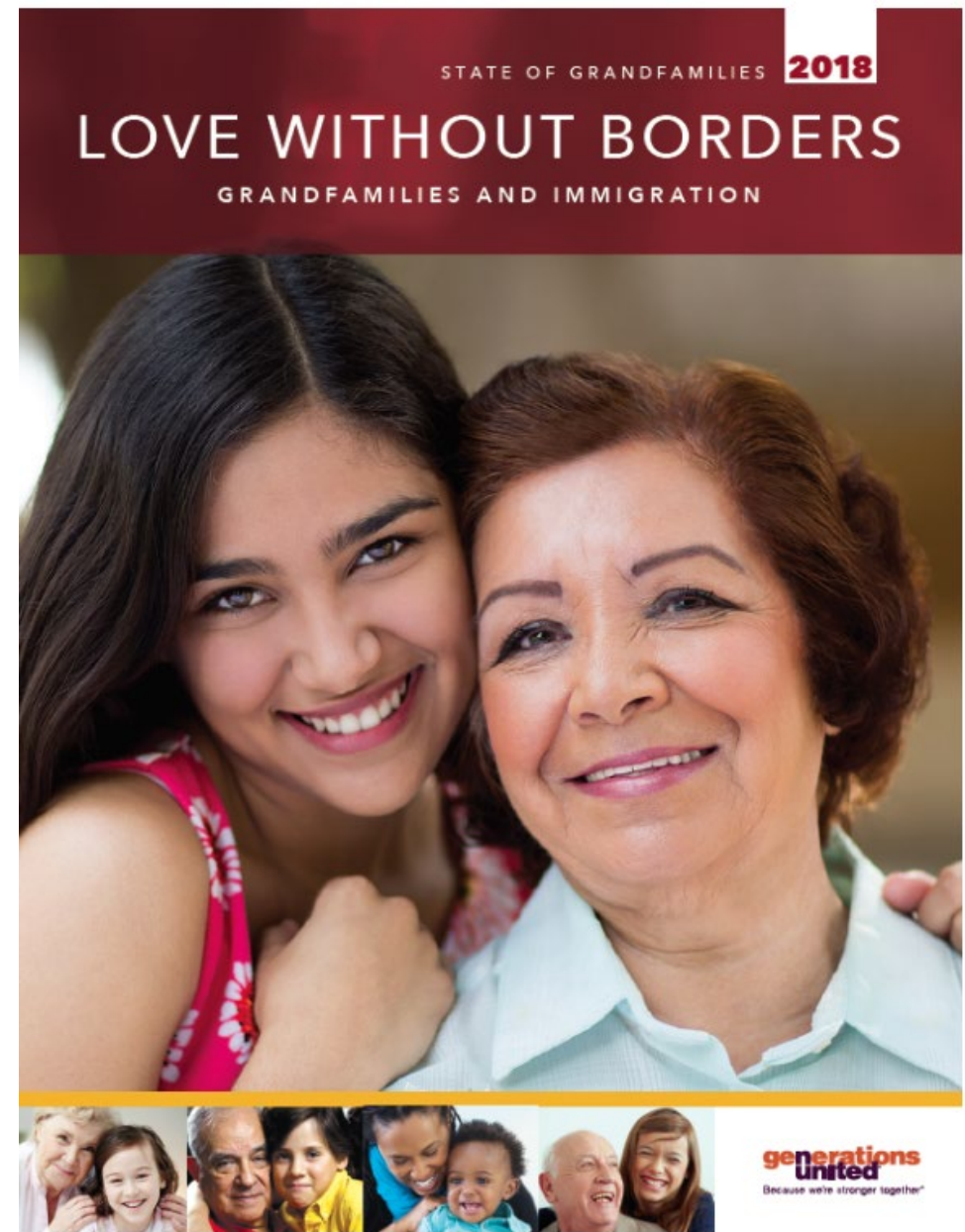
## The First-Ever National Technical Assistance Center for those who Serve Kinship/Grandfamilies

We help 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.

# Immigrant Grandfamilies

In 2018, about 21 percent of the 2.6 million children in grandfamilies — 544,000 children — were living in immigrant grandfamilies

Immigrant grandfamilies = the child, the parent(s), and/or the kinship care provider(s) are foreign-born





< Resources

TIP SHEET

# Supporting Kinship Families of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

Download This Resource

# Who is in our audience today?

## Poll #1 - What type of organization or system do you primarily represent?

- Child welfare
- Immigration services
- Aging services
- Community-based service organization
- Disability
- Housing
- Kinship Navigator
- Education
- I'm a kinship caregiver
- Other

# Who is in our audience today?

**Poll #2 – How much knowledge do you have about unaccompanied immigrant children?**

- A lot of knowledge
- Some knowledge
- Little to no knowledge



# Stay Connected & Access Support

Sign up for our monthly newsletter, which will provide you with updates on new Network resources.





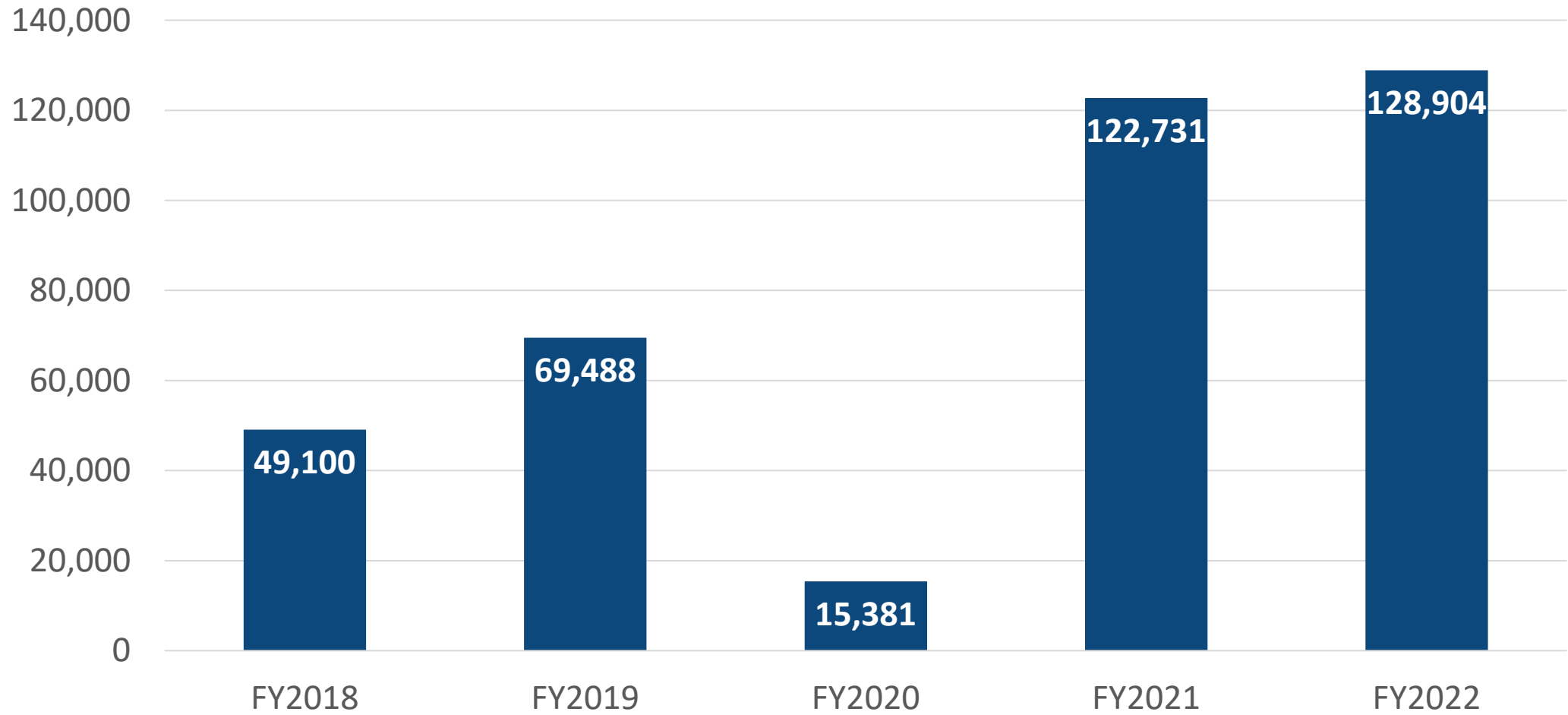
The Network is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$9,950,000 with 95 percentage funded by ACL/HHS and \$523,684 and 5 percentage funded by non-government sources. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

**Unaccompanied immigrant children** (UC) are children under the age of 18 who cross into the United States with **no lawful immigration status** and with **no parent or legal guardian** in the United States that is *immediately* available to provide care.

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, Programs: Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, General Data: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data#Incoming%20Referrals>

Other terms used include:  
Unaccompanied minors,  
unaccompanied alien  
children

# Record numbers of UC have been arriving in recent years.



Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, General Data: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data#Incoming%20Referrals>

They tend to be **teenagers**, are more likely to be **male**, and overwhelmingly arrive from Central America.



72% are between the ages of 15 and >18



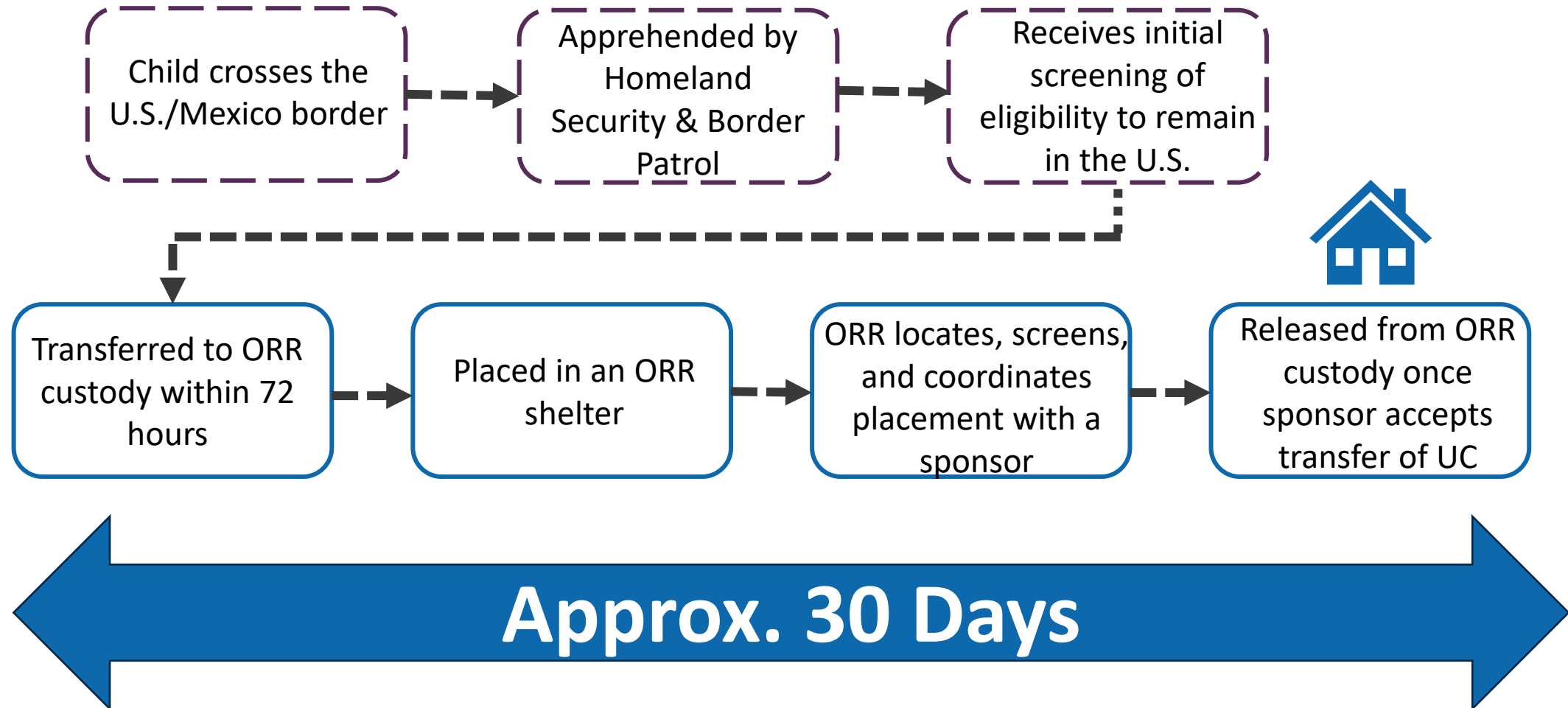
64% are male and 36% female



Home country: 47% Guatemala, 29% Honduras, 13% El Salvador, 11% 'other'



# The “typical” pathway for UC from arrival to release.



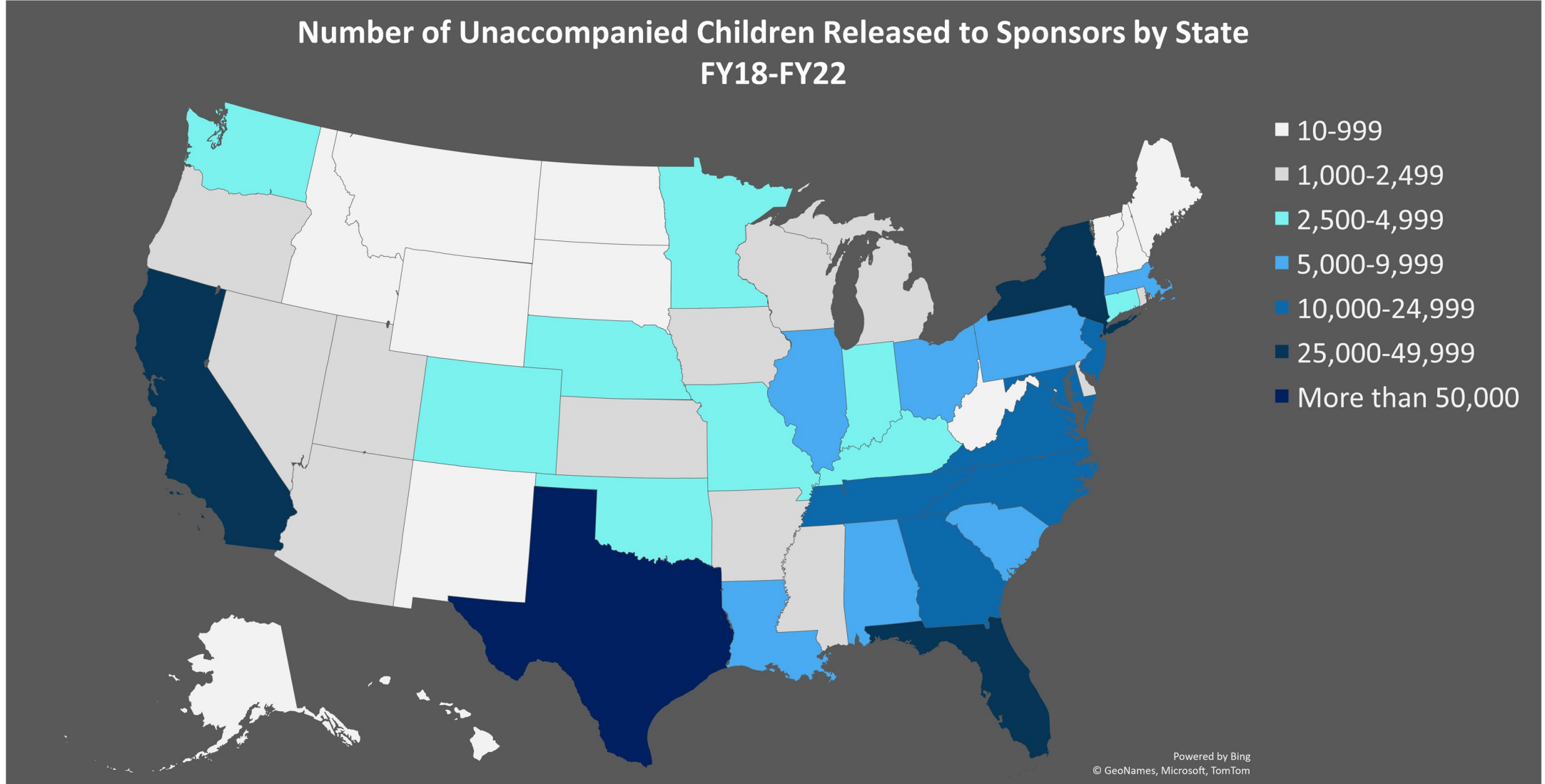


**60%** of UC released to  
sponsors are released to kin.

Source: FY21 (October-September), Office of Refugee Resettlement, Latest UC Data:

<https://www.hhs.gov/programs/social-services/unaccompanied-children/latest-uc-data-fy2021/index.html>

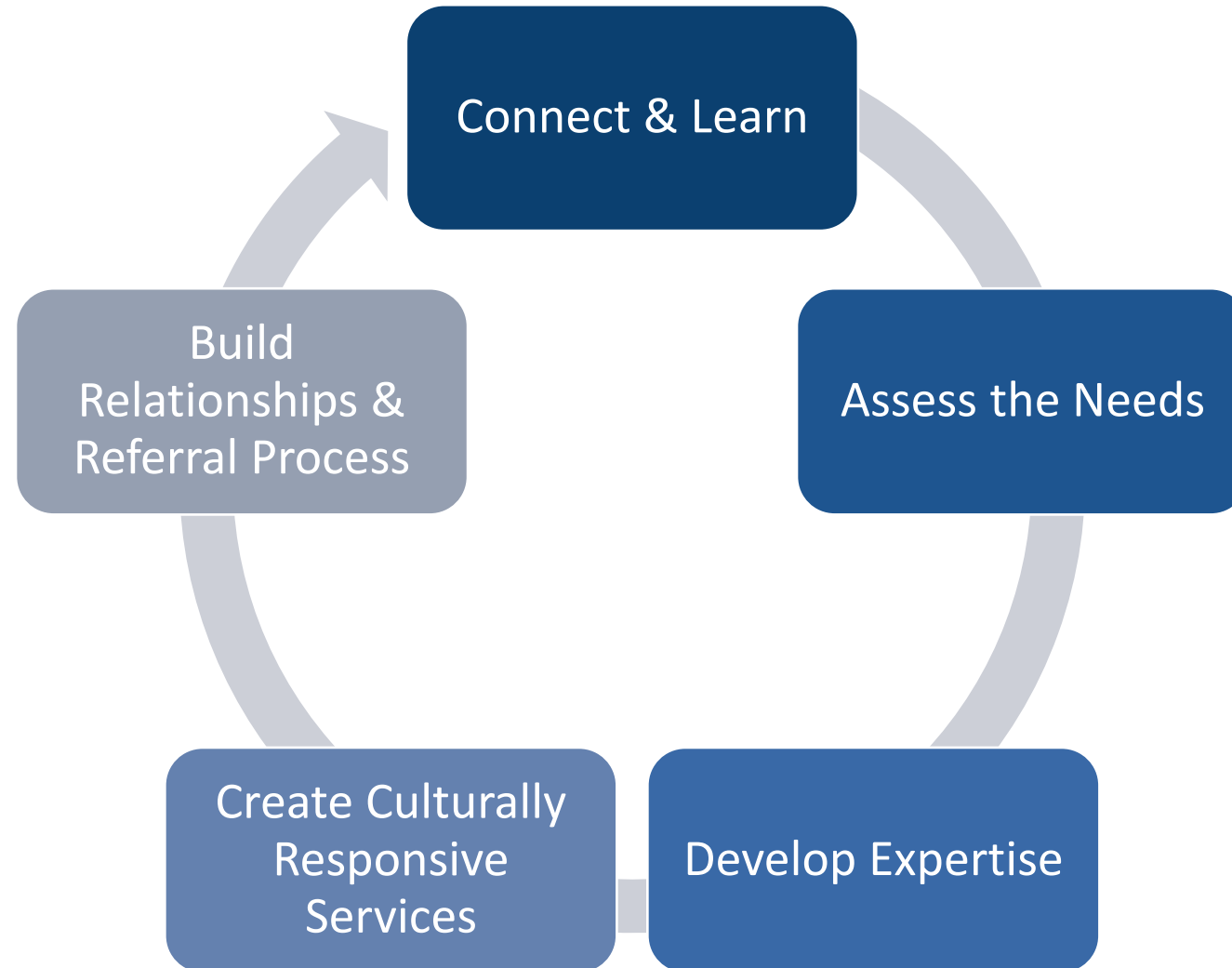
# We have **data** at the **state and county** level about where UC are released.



Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, Children Released by State: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/grant-funding/unaccompanied-children-released-sponsors-state>



Kinship programs should explore supports for UC kinship families in their community.





Legal



Education



Health



Housing



Finances



Child Welfare

The challenges faced by UC kinship families are the same as other kinship families but often with an added layer of complexity.

Source: Grandfamilies Kinship Support Network: <https://www.gksnetwork.org/resources/grandfamilies-kinship-families-strengths-challenges/> and <https://www.gksnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ana-Beltran-Overview.pdf>



**Legal**



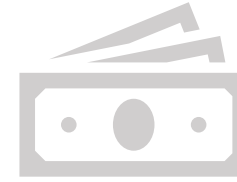
Education



Health



Housing



Finances



Child Welfare

Kin caregivers of unaccompanied immigrant children will likely need access not only to **immigration attorneys** to help the children in immigration court but also to **family lawyers** who can help them gain custody or other legal rights so they are able to make medical and education decisions. In addition, family court involvement is necessary for certain pathways to citizenship.



Legal



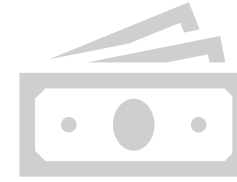
**Education**



Health



Housing



Finances



Child Welfare

Many unaccompanied immigrant children have had **limited or interrupted education**, meaning that, in addition to needing language support in school, they may need credit recovery and academic support to catch up to their peers and obtain a high school diploma or GED.



Legal



Education



**Health**



Housing



Finances



Child Welfare

Many unaccompanied immigrant children previously lacked access to primary care and have **unmet physical and mental health needs**. Immunization records for school enrollment are often not available, requiring the child to receive many vaccinations over again. The experience of trauma in their home country, on their journey to the U.S., and as they navigate their new life may lead to a need for mental health support with providers who have specialized training with this population.



Legal



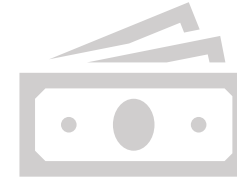
Education



Health



**Housing**



Finances



Child Welfare

If kin placements themselves are immigrants or undocumented, they may have challenges obtaining housing due to things such as a **lack of a credit score, bank account, and/or social security number**. In addition to the financial strain, this could be a barrier if a larger home is needed to help care for their new placement. **High cost of living** in urban areas where many immigrant communities reside is also a barrier.



Legal



Education



Health



Housing



**Finances**



Child Welfare

Many kin **caregivers may not have access to every public benefit** due to their or the children's immigration status. Additionally, the "public charge" rule can prevent individuals deemed "likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence" from obtaining lawful permanent residence status. Fear of this rule may prevent caregivers from accessing supports they could qualify for.

Teenagers may also feel **pressure to work** and contribute to the household or send money back to their home country.



Legal



Education



Health



Housing



Finances



**Child Welfare**

Unaccompanied immigrant children are typically placed with kin without child welfare involvement, making them **ineligible for foster care maintenance payments or kinship stipends**. Anecdotal information indicates that some unaccompanied immigrant children end up in foster care after placement with their sponsor due to their sponsor no longer being able to care for them or family conflict.

The caregivers may be **hesitant to proactively reach out** for support due to mistrust or fear of government involvement.



Kinship programs should explore supports for UC kinship families in their community.

