



Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network



A National Investment in System Efficiency & Family Stability



Across the United States, grandparents, other relatives, and close family friends are raising approximately 2.5 million children.

These families, known as grandfamilies or kinship families, play a quiet but essential role in stabilizing communities and reducing long-term public costs.

Created by Generations United in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) and funded by Congress, the Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network (Network) is the nation's only national initiative designed to help states, Tribes, and communities improve their supports for kinship families and coordinate the public systems that serve these families.

For more than four years, the Network has helped reduce duplication, improve alignment among programs, increase cross-system collaboration, and accelerate the use of evidence-based approaches in serving kinship families—maximizing the return on federal investment across public systems.



Why Kinship Families Matter to Systems

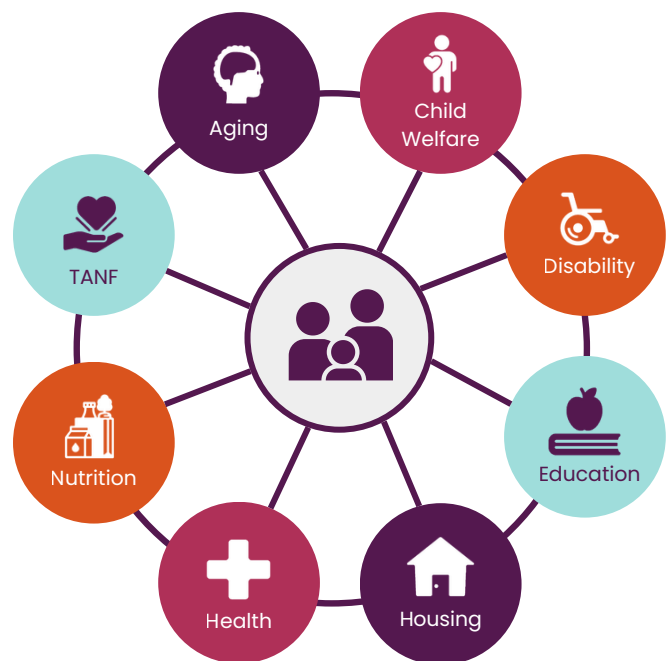
Only about 5 percent of children raised by kin are involved with the foster care system. As such, most children from kinship families do not receive support from foster care and must rely on other support systems.

Did you know?

Decades of research prove that children who cannot remain with their parents thrive when raised by their kin. They are more likely to have a safe, stable, and loving childhood connected to their siblings and community than children raised by non-kin. When systems collaborate, these positive outcomes are achieved at lower public cost.

Support Systems

Greater coordination across systems that kinship families rely on makes it easier for families to access support, reduces administrative burden, and helps public funds work harder.



Who We Are

In 2021, Congress appropriated \$10 million over five years to establish the nation's first national center dedicated to strengthening how public systems serve kinship families and grandfamilies. Through a competitive process, the U.S. Administration for Community Living awarded the cooperative agreement to Generations United, a 40-year-old organization that operates the Network in partnership with: four other national organizations; an independent evaluator that provides data-driven insight into our reach, quality, and impact; and more than a dozen subject matter experts, including kin caregivers.

Operated By

**generations
united**

Because we're stronger together

Managing Partners



NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association



Living Longer - Aging Better



Evaluated By

Child Trends





What We Do

The Network helps states, Tribes, and territories improve coordination across aging, child welfare, disability, education, health, housing, nutrition, and TANF programs. We do so by:



Supporting accountability and continuous improvement by sharing best practices & connecting experts nationwide.



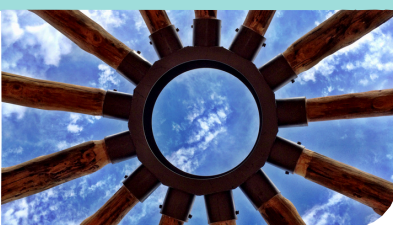
Providing structured learning opportunities that accelerate adoption of evidence-based approaches.



Sharing practical tools and data-informed guidance that reduce administrative burden and speed access to services.



Identifying high-performing programs so states and Tribes can build on what already works.



Serving as a thought partner to federal, state, and local agencies to strengthen materials, curricula, and briefs.



By aligning policy, practice, and performance, the Network ensures that federal investments achieve measurable impact.

Who We Support

The Network works with professionals who design, manage, and deliver kinship services, as well as those across public systems who encounter kinship families through their work. This includes state, Tribal, and territorial agencies; kinship navigators and administrators; and community- and faith-based organizations.

...And What They Say About Us

“

I'm not sure I would have thought about partnering with my local TANF office in the way that I am now because of the Network. They really help me connect the dots.”

**Jessica Frisina, Permanency Coordinator
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC)**

“

From questions about launching as an independent nonprofit to designing our model, managing referrals, and evaluating the program, the Network could answer absolutely every question I had.”

**Holly Handler, Co-Founder
Kin Support Program – Haa Yaitx'u Saiani (AK)**

“

Their work was thorough, in-depth, professional, and backed by a true understanding of our population.”

**Barb Kempf, LMSW, President of Family Programs
Foster Adopt Connect (KS and MO)**



Scan to read more at:
gksnetwork.org/network-impact

How We Drive Impact

Since launching in 2021, the Network has:

REACHED

625K

supporters of kinship
+ grandfamilies

ANSWERED

1.2K+

requests for
assistance

ENGAGED

65K+

professionals in
learning programs

PUBLISHED

145+

practical
resources

RECOGNIZED

17

high-performing
kinship programs

DISSEMINATED

19

effective kinship
practices

Trusted by Professionals



9 in 10 webinar
attendees say
they use what
they learned



94% of people who
received support
recommend the
Network

Impact Highlights

Our work has translated into concrete system improvements across states and Tribes nationwide.



Building New Infrastructure

We have helped launch new community-based kinship programs and supported the creation of statewide leadership structures to strengthen coordination for kinship families.

States: AK, MA, VA



Strengthening Existing Systems

We have partnered with state and local agencies to refine outreach to caregivers, collect and analyze data for continuous improvement, and enhance kinship services.

States: ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MI, MO, NC, NY, OH, OR, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI



Scaling Proven Models and Practices

We have co-created model kin-specific licensing standards to enhance supports for kinship foster families and helped agencies identify and adopt federally approved, evidence-based kinship navigator models that connect families to critical supports.

States: AL, NM, TX, UT, WV



Improving Coordination and Efficiency

We have supported cross-system collaboration and shared best practices to strengthen service coordination for kinship families.

States: CA, CO, GA, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MT, NC, NM, NY, OK, PA, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI, WY

Bridging Systems for Kinship Families Intensive Assistance:

ID, Oneida Nation of WI, and San Diego County, CA



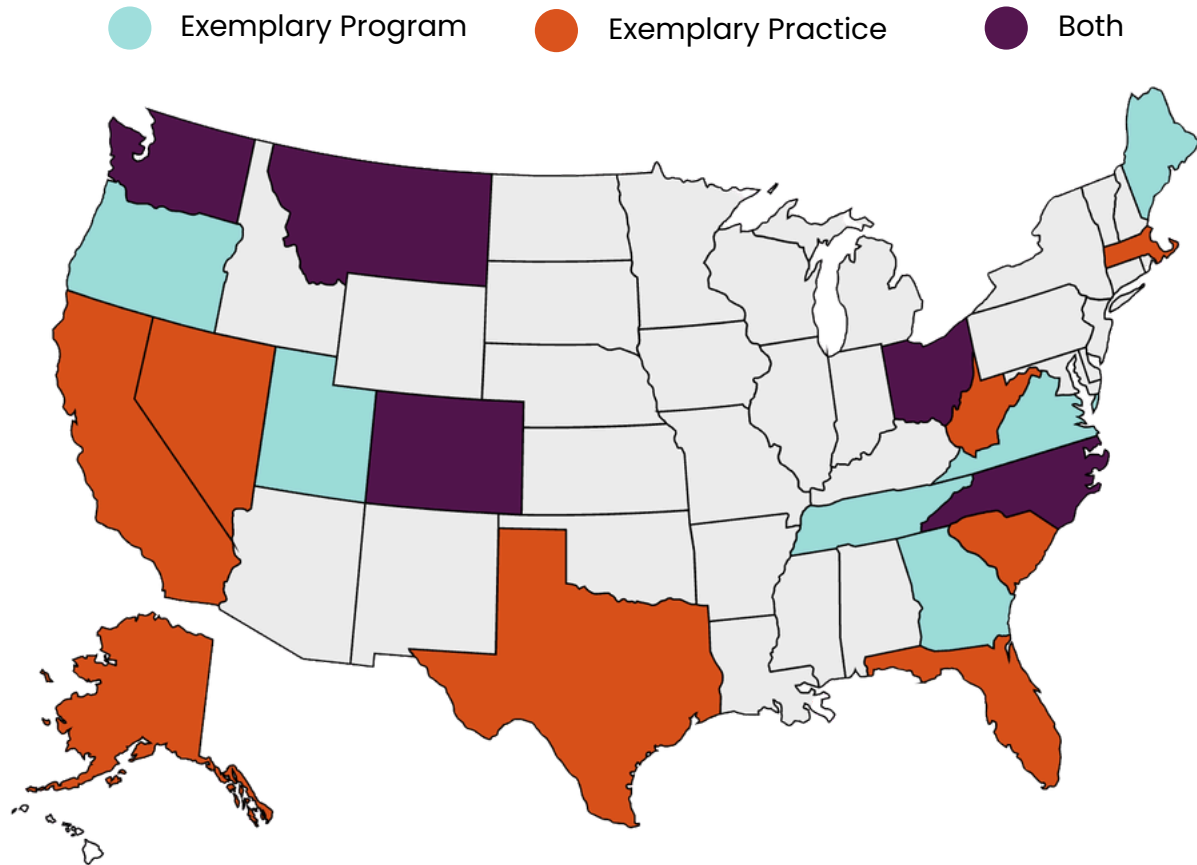
Advancing Workforce Capacity

We have expanded no-cost professional development and curated training resources to help agencies strengthen services and maximize the return on public funding.

States: AK, AZ, CA, CO, DC, KS, MA, MD, MI, MO, NC, NM, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WI

Promoting Proven Programs & Practices

The Network identifies high-performing kinship programs and practices as Exemplary and elevates them nationally—helping reduce duplication and speed the adoption of evidence-based approaches. Since launching the designation just three years ago, organizations and agencies in 20 states and Washington, DC have earned this recognition.



Our Process

Our process is rigorous and includes an open national application, a structured review using evidence-based criteria developed with an independent evaluator, & site visits or stakeholder interviews to validate real-world impact.

“The Exemplary Practice designation and technical assistance helped us emphasize our commitment to excellence and share best practices with community partners, kinship families, funders, and more.”



Scan to read more at:
gksnetwork.org/resources/exemplary-policies-practices-and-programs/




Arcelia Armstrong, Caregiver Support & Kinship Navigator Program Director
The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. (AOoA)'s Kinship Navigator Program

A Return on Investment

The Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network drives system alignment and performance nationwide—helping jurisdictions coordinate programs, accelerate the use of proven approaches, and improve how services are delivered. By bringing a national perspective, connecting experts across states and Tribes, and translating research and federal priorities into practical guidance, the Network enables more consistent, efficient, and effective service delivery.

Results

Because kinship families intersect with multiple systems—including aging, child welfare, disability, education, health, housing, nutrition, and TANF—this coordination extends impact beyond any single program. The result is:

-  Consistent alignment with federal priorities
-  Reduced administrative burden and duplication
-  Faster adoption of evidence-based practices
-  Improved stewardship of public funds

Conclusion

Continued investment ensures that kinship families are supported through coordinated systems. The Network's expertise and the trust it has cultivated with professionals nationwide ensure that public dollars achieve measurable, long-term impact, and that states, Tribes, and territories have access to solutions informed by data-driven best practices.

Learn More

We would love to connect with you to discuss how the Network can support federal, state, and Tribal priorities around kinship care, family stability, and system coordination.



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GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK

A National Technical Assistance Center

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**The Network is a project
of Generations United**

**generations
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Because we're stronger together