

The Role of Private Child Welfare Agencies in Kin-Specific Licensing and Supports

July 16, 2026

- Welcome, we will begin at the top of the hour
- Please type in the **chat** box - your name, state, tribe (if applicable), and role
- Type questions in the **chat** box at any point during our time together
- **We will provide a separate meeting link for a 30-minute Q&A with our presenters, starting in an hour, at 2 PM ET**
- By the end of the week, all participants will receive a link to the slides and the recording

Who We Are & How We Help



Learning Collaboratives and Information Dissemination

The Network hosts webinars and facilitates learning collaboratives.



A Centralized Hub

The Network is elevating exemplary kinship/grandfamily practices and programs from around the country.



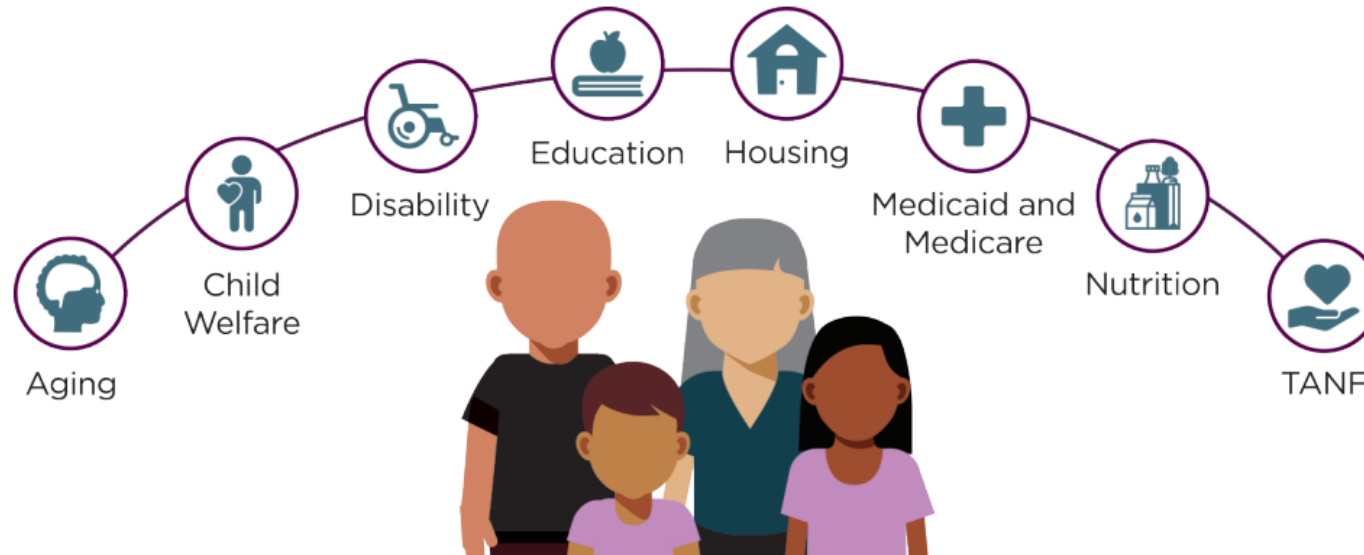
Bridging Systems for Kinship Families

The Network is helping Idaho, San Diego County, and Oneida Nation of Wisconsin optimize their collaborative approaches and improve their services. Solutions will be replicable for others.



Individual Assistance

We respond to individual requests for help from government agencies and nonprofit organizations.



GKSNetwork.org

Welcome Our Panelists



Marina Nitze
Subject Matter Expert,
Grandfamilies & Kinship
Support Network



Scott Batson
Arrow Child & Family
Ministries



Rebecca Boccia-Fern
Children's Hope Alliance



Erica Burgess
Burgess Consultative
Group



Leah Wilson
Arrow Child & Family
Ministries



Dr. Ali Caliando
Kinship Policy Lab

WEBINAR

The Role of Private Child Welfare Agencies in Kin-specific Licensing and Supports

Marina Nitze, July 2026

Today's Agenda

- Welcome and framing
- Kin-specific licensing overview: What's changed and why?
- Panel discussion
- Closing and resources

Optional 30 minute Q&A to follow

The background is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this background are several thin, white, hand-drawn style oval lines. These lines are concentric and slightly irregular, creating a sense of depth and movement. They are centered horizontally and vertically, framing the text.

Welcome



Kin-specific licensing overview: What's changed and why?

Where We Started

- Federal rule required foster home licensing standards to be **the same** for relatives and non-relatives
- Nationally, **most** kinship caregivers were unlicensed; they had placement of children but **no or less financial**

Federal Rule Overview



As of December 1, 2023, title IV-E agencies have the **option** to have a kin-specific licensing or approval process that recognizes the unique needs of kinship caregivers.

Payments to these licensed or approved kinship caregivers are eligible for title IV-E reimbursement (for an otherwise-eligible child).

Federal Rule Requirements



The Act requires **only** that licensing or approval standards established by the state or tribe **are reasonably in accordance with recommended standards of national organizations for foster family homes**

and that the caregiver fully meet federal requirements under section **471(a)(20)** of the Act (concerning criminal background checks for all foster parents).

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New Kin-Specific Model Standards



Written by:

- A Second Chance Inc.
- American Bar Association Center on Children & the Law
- Children's Rights
- CWPolicy
- Generations United and its Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center
- National Indian Child Welfare Association
- National Association for Regulatory Administration
- Think of Us

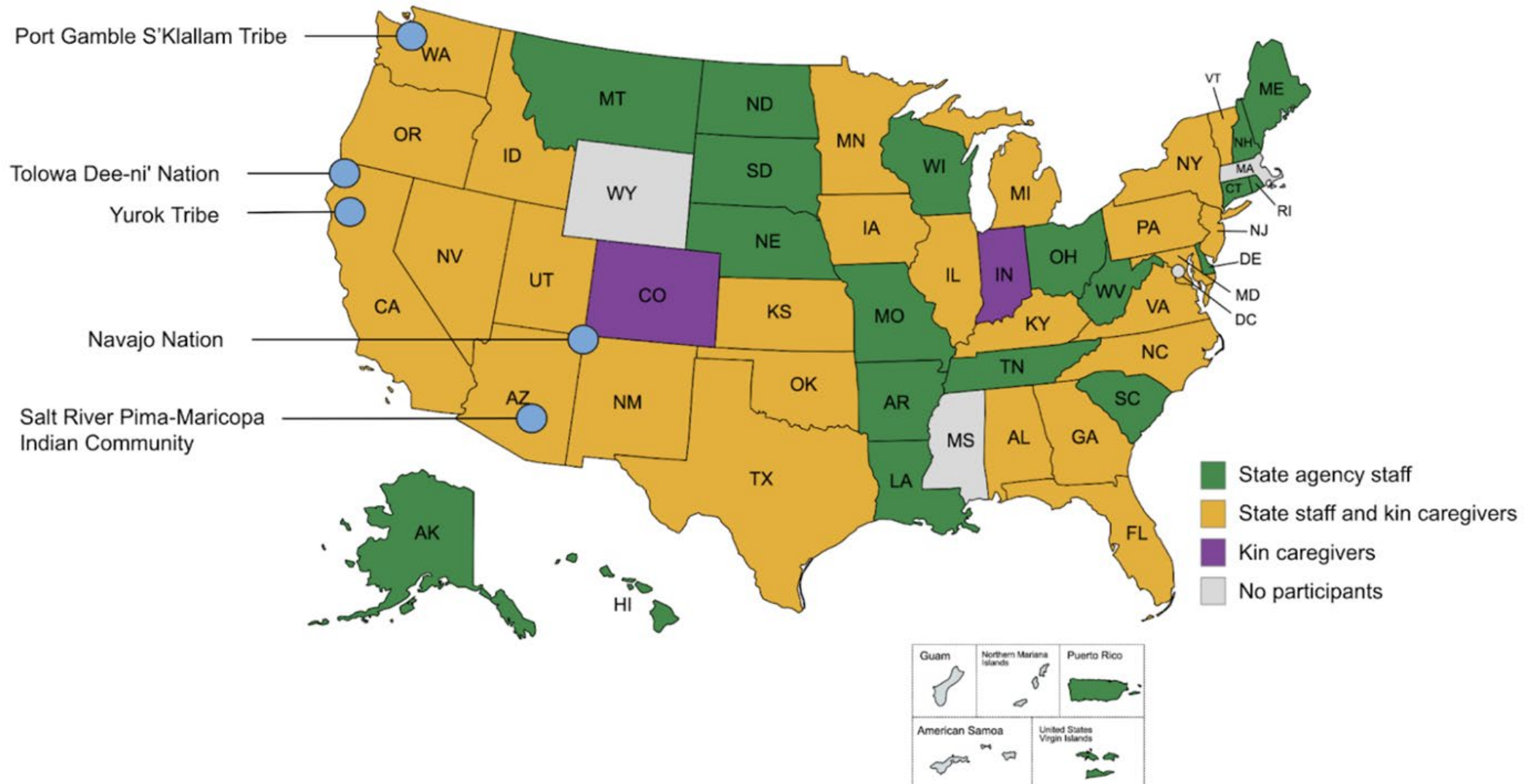
Kin-Specific Model Standards



- 1. Required background checks
- 1. Kin caregiver assessment (includes safety assessment of home)

The kin-specific standards are tightly modeled on long-standing emergency kin placement processes.

- **Goal: 100% certification within 7 days of placement with kin.**
- Co-designed with 100s of agency employees and kin caregivers.



Expected Benefits

- 100% equitable support for kinship caregivers with placement
- No more unsupported
- More kin placements
- More kin guardianship
- Staff can focus

417(a)(20)



For each kinship caregiver you seek to certify:

- ☐ Send fingerprints to the FBI
- ☐ Check the child abuse and neglect registry of any state where that caregiver lived in the last 5 years

For each adult living in the kinship caregiver's home*:

- ☐ Check the child abuse and neglect registry of any state where that adult lived in the last 5 years

*CAPTA or Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act may require you to fingerprint

Model Standards



For each kinship caregiver you seek to certify:

- ☐ Send fingerprints to the FBI
- ☐ Check the child abuse and neglect registry of any state where that caregiver lived in the last 5 years
- ☐ Sex offender registry
- ☐ Name-based in-state background check

For each adult living in the kinship caregiver's home*:

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- ☐ Sex offender registry
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*CAPTA or Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act may require you to fingerprint

Federally Disqualifying Crimes



Permanently disqualifying:

- ☐ felony conviction for child abuse or neglect
- ☐ felony conviction for spousal abuse
- ☐ felony conviction for a crime against children (including child pornography)
- ☐ felony conviction involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery

Disqualifying if a **felony conviction in the last 5 years:**

- ☐ physical assault
- ☐ battery
- ☐ a drug-related offense

Kin-Specific Licensing Progress and Documents

For purposes of this document:

“Approved” indicates that the Children’s Bureau approved the jurisdiction’s plan.

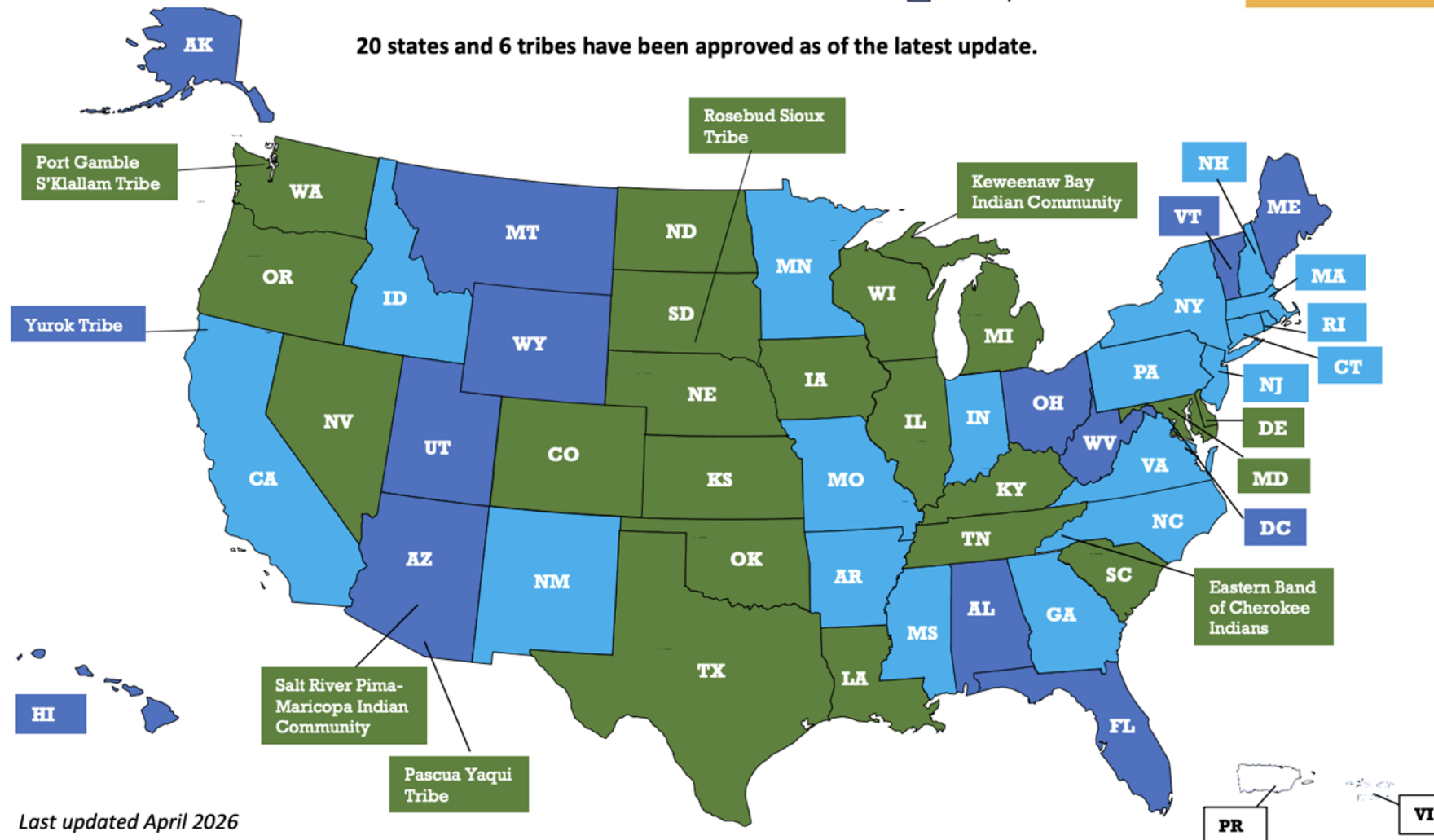
“Submitted” indicates that a jurisdiction has submitted a plan to the Children’s Bureau.

“Committed to Implement” indicates that a jurisdiction has decided to implement kin-specific licensing and is in the process of making an implementation plan.

“Interested” indicates that a jurisdiction is exploring kin-specific licensing.

- Approved
- Submitted
- Committed to implement
- Interested
- No response

20 states and 6 tribes have been approved as of the latest update.



Last updated April 2026

What is NOT changing

- Background check processes remain the same
- No safety standards were reduced or
- Flexibility was added based on conversations with subject matter experts

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Panel

Today's Panelists

- Scott Batson, Arrow Child & Family Ministries
- Leah Wilson, Arrow Child & Family Ministries
- Rebecca Boccia-Fern, Children's Hope Alliance
- Erica Burgess, Burgess Consultative Group
- Dr. Ali Caliendo, Kinship Policy Lab

Join Us for our Next Webinar!



Tuesday, July 21, 2026
2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. ET

Register Here



Connect & Access Support

Request assistance

We will add you to our monthly newsletter list, unless you ask us not to. To see past issues: www.gksnetwork.org/the-network-connection-newsletter/

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