

# Kinship Navigator Services Overview

## **WHAT ARE KINSHIP NAVIGATOR SERVICES?**

Kinship Navigator Services assist kinship caregivers in learning about, finding, and using programs and services to meet their needs. Kinship Navigator Services are structured to meet the needs of kinship caregivers while supporting placement stability, reunification, and child safety. Kinship caregivers are encouraged to vocalize their own needs and goals allowing them to play an integral role in the direction of service provision. Kinship Navigator Services support standards and goals established by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR KINSHIP NAVIGATOR SERVICES? HOW LONG IS THIS SERVICE PACKAGE AVAILABLE?**

Kinship Navigator Services are available during an open HHS service case to kin or fictive kin caregivers with children placed in their care or temporarily residing with them as arranged by the child's parent. These services and supports may be provided to kinship caregivers during an open HHS service case. The Kinship Navigator Services case may remain open as long as the caregiver has ongoing needs.

Kinship specialists will make initial phone contact with the kinship caregivers within two business days of the HHS referral. If the kinship caregivers accept services, the kinship specialist will make in-person contact with the kinship caregivers within five business days of the HHS referral.

The kinship specialist will provide, at a minimum, two (2) hours of services and/or supports to kinship caregivers per month. Within the first 30 calendar days, an ecomap will be completed with kinship caregivers. The ecomap is used to identify other family members, neighbors, friends, or persons known to the kinship caregivers who may serve as potential supports during placement of the children.

If a child moves from one kinship placement to another, the new kinship caregivers are eligible for services/supports.

## **WHAT CAN KINSHIP CAREGIVERS EXPECT WHEN RECEIVING KINSHIP NAVIGATOR SERVICES?**

Kinship Navigator Services focus on providing support to the kinship caregiver, tailored to be culturally responsive and supportive to individuals of all races, religions, ages, genders, gender expressions, sexual orientations, social economic status and/or physical or mental health status. Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assessment of kinship caregiver needs related to identifying the best way to support them and the children in their care.

- Development of a kinship care plan with action steps specific to identified outcomes. This could include such things as:
  - Support with identifying affordable child care;
  - Access to medical, dental, and mental health services;
  - Ensuring basic needs are met including clothing, beds/cribs/furniture, food, and gas cards.
- Opportunities for parent education, including SafeCare.
- Support groups providing an outlet for shared communication and emotional support.
- Connecting kinship caregivers with supplemental resources such as food assistance, child care assistance, Family Investment Program (FIP), medical insurance, and/or legal aid.

Service delivery is targeted toward increasing placement in kinship care, reducing placement in stranger foster care, supporting placement stability and reducing re-abuse.