

CHILD WELFARE UPDATE

Title:	Kinship Navigator Services
Publish Date:	July 9, 2021
Effective Date:	July 15, 2021
Program Manager:	Mindy Norwood, Family-Centered Services (FCS) Program Manager mnorwoo@dhs.state.ia.us 515.281.4212
Background Information:	<p>Background Information:</p> <p>Kinship Navigator Services is an additional service package available under the current family-centered services (FCS) contracts. These services and supports are available statewide and provided by all of the current FCS contractors. FCS contractors will accept referrals effective July 15, 2021.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Kinship Navigator Services are available during an open Department of Human Services (DHS) 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 for a maximum of four months. As long as there is an open DHS service case and an identified need, there is no limit to the number of referrals for a kinship caregiver to receive Kinship Navigator Services. If a child moves from one kinship placement to another, the new kinship caregivers are eligible for services/supports.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement:</p> <p>Service delivery outlined within the FCS contracts was modeled after the services and supports provided by Families First Counseling Services under the Kinship Navigator Program contract within the Cedar Rapids Service Area. The scope of work for Kinship Navigator Services under the FCS contracts is based upon feedback received by Families First Counseling Services, kinship caregivers, and others participating in the services under the Kinship</p>

	<p>Navigator Program. The FCS contractors as well as DHS policy and field were also engaged in discussions regarding statewide expansion.</p> <p>Reason for the Change:</p> <p>The reason for the change is to expand availability of services and supports provided to kinship caregivers statewide. Prior to statewide implementation of Kinship Navigator Services, services and supports were limited to counties within the Cedar Rapids Service Area provided by one contractor.</p>
<p>What Is Changing:</p>	<p>What Is Changing:</p> <p>Effective July 15, 2021 FCS contractors will begin accepting referrals for Kinship Navigator Services.</p> <p>Who Is Impacted:</p> <p>These changes will positively impact kinship caregiver families across the state.</p>
<p>What Is Not Changing:</p>	<p>Provide a brief summary of aspects of the policy, practice, initiative, or contract that will not be impacted by the implemented changes:</p> <p>The FCS contractors will continue to provide other service packages as specified within the current FCS contracts.</p>
<p>Expected Benefits:</p>	<p>Indicate the positive outcomes that are expected as the result of the change:</p> <p>Services and supports will be provided to kinship caregivers statewide. Kinship Navigator Services focus on providing support to the kinship caregiver, tailored to be culturally responsive and supportive to individuals of all race, religion, age, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, social economic status and/or physical or mental health. Activities include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support with identifying affordable childcare; ○ Access to medical, dental, and mental health services; ○ Ensure 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.