

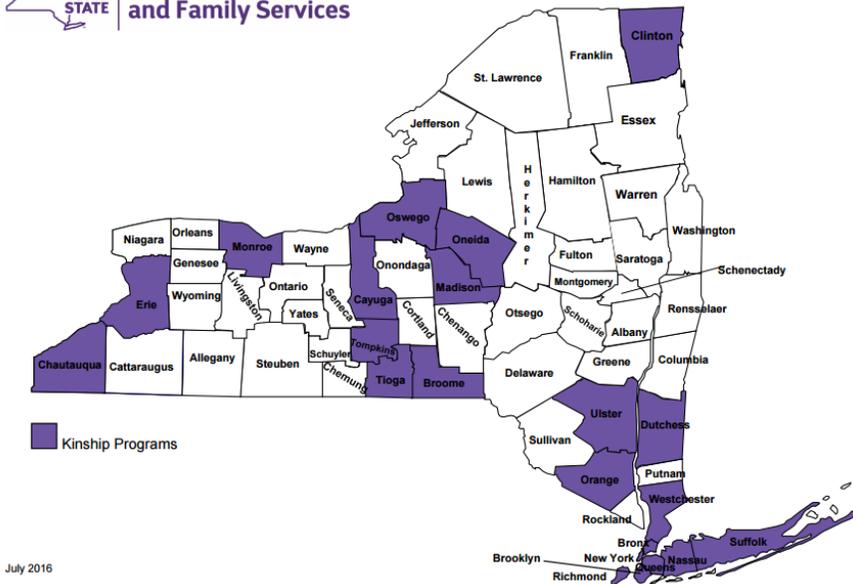
2017-18 BUDGET PRIORITY

Kinship care refers to non-parents (predominantly grandparents, as well as other relatives and close family friends) who care for children when parents are unable or unwilling to care for their children. The majority of these households in NYS ($\geq 95\%$) do not receive supports from the foster care system. There are approximately **300,000 children** living with kinship caregivers in NYS.

Kinship caregivers, outside of the foster care system, have little or no supports, despite the fact that children live with their kin for many of the same reasons that children enter foster care. Many of these families need access to additional resources especially when they first take on the responsibility of caring for children, and this is where kinship care programs provide help.



Last year, the NYS legislature added \$1.9 million to the Governor's \$338,750 (Aid to Localities) for local kinship programs. **The funds allowed The Office of Children and Families (OCFS) to fund 22 local kinship programs in FY 2016-17, up from 13 programs in FY 2015-16, and 8 programs in FY 2014-15.** The legislature also added an additional \$100,000 to the Governor's \$220,500 budget allocation for a statewide Kinship Navigator. Currently, the 22 OCFS funded kinship care programs cover 22 counties (see map), with the Navigator covering the remaining 40. The local programs and the Kinship Navigator are vital to the local



kinship communities, enabling new kinship families to stabilize and flourish via case management, access to public agency services, specialized kinship supports, and assistance with local advocacy. The Governor's proposed FY2017-17 budget once again provides \$338,750 and \$220,500 (Aid to Localities pp. 363 & 365).

In order to maintain the progress the state has made in the last 3 years in providing services to vulnerable children living with kinship families, it is important for the state to continue to maintain level funding for kinship support services.

PLEASE SUPPORT KINSHIP SERVICES BY MAINTAINING LEVEL FUNDING AT \$2,551,250 FOR FY 2017-18