



FY2016-17 - Increase Funding For Local Kinship Care Programs By \$1.3 Million

Across New York State more than 153,000 children live with non-parents (some estimates are as high as 250,000). Few are supported by the foster care system. These kinship caregivers (grandparents, other relatives, family friends), are the first resource for children who can no longer live with their parents. But for their interventions, thousands more children would be in foster care or living with unstable parents.

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.

Currently, 13 Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) funded kinship care programs cover 17 counties, plus the statewide Kinship Navigator information and referral program. 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, to access public agency services, specialized kinship supports, and to assist with local advocacy.

In 2009, there were 21 programs covering 32 counties. Since then funding for local kinship programs has been slashed, forcing local programs to close, and whole geographic areas to lose vital supports. Areas without local programs include Onondaga, Dutchess, Sullivan, Steuben, and over 40 other counties.

Last year, the NYS legislature added \$1 million to the Governor's \$330,750 (Aid to Localities) for local kinship programs. **The funds allowed OCFS to fund 13 programs, each at \$103,000.** For programs to increase their ability to reach and serve more caregivers, we request:

- additional \$47,000 for each currently funded program (total \$611,000).
- additional \$150,000 for 5 new programs, each at \$150,000 (total \$750,000).
- additional \$100,000 for the statewide Kinship Navigator.

Please support an additional \$1,361,000 to be added to the current Legislative add of \$1,000,000 (plus Governor's \$330,750), bringing the total for local kinship care programs to \$2,691,750, plus \$100,000 for the statewide Kinship Navigator.