



2017-18 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Increase Funding for the NYS Kinship Navigator by \$89,500

With an estimated 320,000 children in the care of grandparents, relatives and close family friends, kinship care is one of New York’s most valuable child welfare resources. Were it not for the intervention of kinship caregivers, many more children would be at risk of entering foster care. The NYS Kinship Navigator (KN) is the only statewide program serving kinship families by offering information, referrals, advocacy, and education for caregivers and professionals.

The NYS Kinship Navigator offers vital services to all of New York.
It is the only specialized kinship program available in 40 of the 62 counties.

While children who enter into kinship care arrangements live with kin for similar reasons as to why they might enter foster care with non-relatives, over 95% do not enter foster care and are not supported by the foster care system. Of the 8,771 children who were newly admitted to foster care in 2015, only 1,376 were put into kinship foster care. Conversely, over 2,100 children were placed by child welfare with kinship caregiver via direct custody without certifying them as foster parents, leaving them no support outside of kinship support services offered by KN and local programs (many more children were placed via conversions to article six private custody or via family interventions without child welfare placements but there is no data collection on these placements).

| 2015 | # of Children Newly Admitted into Foster Care | # of Children Placed into Approved and Certified Kinship Foster Care | # Kin Placement (Direct Custody) | # of Children Entering KinGAP |
|------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Upstate Totals: | 4866 | 351 | 2023 | 69 |
| NYC Totals: | 3905 | 1025 | 149 | 272 |
| State Total: | 8771 | 1376 | 2172 | 341 |

Source: OCFS 2015 Relative Placement Tables found at <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/Trends%20in%20Relative%20Placements%20Tables%20091916.pdf>

In 2012, thanks to a federal grant from the Children’s Bureau, the Kinship Navigator implemented a new practice model for kinship care. It used a Permission to Contact (PTC) procedure in five target counties, which resulted in a **600%** increase in referrals over the course of the grant, as well as increased legal assistance and supportive services for caregivers. The federal grant ended in 2016, but not before KN was able to implement a regional kinship navigator model to promote additional counties utilizing the PTC procedure to help caregivers access vital support services. This budget request would allow KN to continue its regionalization and expansion of the Permission to Contact procedure to reach more kinship families across the state and to connect them to vital services. In FY2016-17, the Legislature added \$100,000 to the Governor’s proposed \$220500. This year, the Governor again proposed \$220,500 (Aid to Localities p. 365).

**PLEASE SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE KINSHIP NAVIGATOR
MAINTAIN LEVEL FUNDING AT \$320,500 AND SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL \$89,500 TO CATHOLIC
FAMILY CENTER’S KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM**