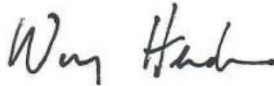


October 13, 2021

DSP Informational Memo Series 2021-29i
Revised November 4, 2021

To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Wendy Henderson
Administrator



RE: 2022 Federal Fiscal Year Relative Caregiver Support Groups Funding Opportunity

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to inform county agencies, tribal agencies and community non-profit agencies of a grant opportunity to assist with the planning and development of new relative caregiver support groups, and to assist with maintenance costs of already established relative caregiver support groups.

Background:

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was passed and signed into law (P.L. 115-123) as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. Among other provisions, the FFPSA amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to allow Title IV-E agencies the option to receive Title IV-E funding for kinship navigator programs that meet certain criteria, including operating in accordance with promising, supported or well-supported practices. Congress set aside \$20 million in funding appropriated under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act and made portions of those monies available to states through a new grant opportunity. These funds are to be used to develop, enhance, or evaluate kinship navigator programs. A full summary of FFPSA is available [here](#).

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) applied to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) in May 2021 and was awarded \$236,188 to develop and enhance current kinship navigator programming. DCF will continue to use the funding in collaboration with a relative caregiver stakeholder group and other state agencies to further develop resources available to relative caregivers. Resources will include information and referral guides regarding frequently asked questions and initial steps to access services, caregiver education, caseworker training, community outreach and communication, and relative caregiver support groups.

Information Summary:

The ACF awarded DCF \$236,188 to be used between October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. Part of this funding will be allocated to support county agencies, tribal agencies, and community non-profit agencies in the development of new relative caregiver support groups and the financial maintenance of already established groups to support relative caregivers.

Qualifying expenses under this grant to support maintenance and development of relative caregiver support groups may include:

- **New:** Costs associated with **Concrete Supports**: such as bus tokens or passes, gas vouchers or grocery store cards, when necessary to fulfill the purpose of the program to help caregivers access existing benefits and services to meet the needs of the children they are raising and their own needs.
- **New:** Costs associated with **Brief Legal Services** for groups to assist kinship caregivers in learning about, finding and using programs and services to meet the needs of the children they are raising and their own needs, which may include supporting any activities designed to assist kinship caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to improve their caregiving.
- Costs associated with outreach activities for groups.
- Costs associated with print materials and mailings for groups.
- Staff costs associated with preparation for groups and presentation at groups.
- Staff costs associated with childcare needs for relative caregivers attending each group.
- Costs associated with venue rental fees for each group meeting.
- Costs associated with food and beverage for each group meeting; not to exceed allowable costs for state rate meals per individual attending group.

The grant program allows county agencies, tribal agencies, and community nonprofit agencies to apply for a grant with DCF to reimburse for qualifying expenses. DCF will allow for and consider applications that utilize a subcontractor for services. Agencies shall apply for the grant on form [DCF-F-5314-E](#) Application for Start-up and/or Maintenance Funding for Relative Caregiver Support Groups and may include additional pages of documentation to complete their narrative responses. Agencies shall submit this application and additional documentation electronically to the department. Completed applications are to be submitted to the Kinship Care Specialist at DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov. The deadline for submission of the application is **November 26, 2021**.

The grant application shall include an agency plan that addresses all the following:

1. How the agency will use the grant funding to engage and support relative caregivers. This summary shall include specific information regarding what the agency will implement, as allowed under each qualifying category.
2. This proposal includes prioritizing funds towards new and existing support groups which focus a part of their curriculum on family reunification, specifically as it relates to substance use and recovery of the biological parent. Please include a description of how the agency will incorporate family reunification/co-parenting and substance abuse recovery into support group(s).

3. The associated cost for activities related to development or maintenance of relative caregiver support groups. The associated costs shall be specific to the activity the agency is engaging in.
4. Measures for how the agency will track and assess the effectiveness of the groups and how the agency will maintain relative caregiver support following the completion of the funding availability on September 30, 2022.

Within 90 days of the conclusion of the grant program, the agency shall submit an exit summary to the department that includes all the following:

1. How the agency used the grant funding to improve support for relative caregivers.
2. The total associated cost to the agency for activities to improve support for relative caregivers.
3. The effectiveness of the activities as measured by the agency.

Agencies that are awarded this grant must agree to document expenses in SPARC within three months of each expenditure, or on a quarterly basis. Agencies that receive the grant shall expense the funding they receive by September 30, 2022.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:

Kinship Care Specialist
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov.

MEMO WEB SITE:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

ATTACHMENT LINKS:

[DCF-F-5314-E: Application for Start-up and/or Maintenance Funding for Relative Caregiver Support Groups](#)