



Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Informational Memo Series 2023-20i

October 6, 2023

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: 2024 Federal Fiscal Year Relative Caregiver Support Funding Opportunity**

**Purpose:**

Across the state of Wisconsin only 39% of children in out of home care are being raised by relatives. Research shows better child welfare outcomes for children who are cared for by relatives. Providing relative caregiver families with direct supports and legal services helps provide some additional resources to meet their needs while they provide care to their relative children.

The purpose of this memo is to inform county agencies, tribal agencies, and community non-profit agencies of a grant opportunity to assist relative caregivers throughout the state in learning about, finding, and using programs and services to meet their needs and the needs of the children they are raising.

**Background:**

Through annual appropriations bills, Congress set aside \$20 million in discretionary funding appropriated under title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Social Security Act in each FYs 2018-2023. The funds are available to all states to develop, enhance or evaluate kinship navigator programs. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) applied to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) for this funding in May 2023.





**Information Summary:**

ACF awarded DCF \$238,967 to use between October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. Part of this funding will be allocated to support county agencies, tribal agencies, and community non-profit agencies in developing plans to provide activities designed to assist relative caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to meet their needs and improve their caregiving.

This grant allows DCF to reimburse county agencies, tribal agencies, and community nonprofit agencies for qualifying expenses that may include:

- Costs associated with **concrete supports** such as bus tokens or passes, gas vouchers or grocery store cards, school related fees when they are used to help relative caregivers access benefits and services **to meet their needs and the needs of the children they are raising**. These include wellness and health related supports. These funds can also be used to promote family engagement and support access to cultural activities. This includes, but is not limited to, memberships to zoos or museums and cultural and recreation fees (YMCA, summer programming).
- Costs associated with **brief legal services** to assist relative caregivers in learning about, finding and using programs and services to meet their needs and the needs of the children they are raising, which may include supporting any activities designed to assist relative caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to improve their caregiving. This includes, but is not limited to, helping caregivers obtain legal guardianship, adoption costs, creating reasonable visitation plans, and consultation on wills and power of attorney questions.
- Costs associated with maintaining existing programs and services for relative caregivers, such as support groups.
- Costs associated with outreach and print materials to engage relative caregivers in the plan's activities.
- Staffing costs associated with preparation and coordination of the plan's activities.
- Costs associated with childcare needs for each activity.
- Costs associated with venue rental fees for each activity.
- Costs associated with food and beverage for each activity; not to exceed allowable costs for state rate meals per individual attending.

Interested agencies may apply independently, develop a consortium identifying a lead agency, or utilize a subcontractor for services. Agencies shall apply for the grant on form DCF-F-5403-E Grant Application Form - Application #437003-G24-0002318 and complete [Application for Relative Caregiver Support Funding Federal Fiscal Year 2024](#). All applications must be completed and submitted to the Kinship Care Specialist via [DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov) **no later than 11:59 p.m. on November 12, 2023**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Develop activities based on input from relative caregivers and youth raised by relative caregivers.
- Include innovative uses of concrete supports and brief legal services.



- Have programming focused on caregiver well-being, navigating shared parenting dynamics, parental substance use and recovery, and preparing caregivers for reunification.

Agencies that are awarded this grant will be expected to sign a contract and shall submit a quarterly summary report to DCF that outlines the relative caregiver support grant programming activities for that quarter and the effectiveness as measured by the agency. Agencies that are awarded this grant must agree to document expenses in SPARC within 60 days of each expenditure. Agencies that receive grant money shall use the funding they receive by September 30, 2024.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:

Kinship Care Specialist  
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care  
[DCF DSP Kinship Navigator@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov).

MEMO WEB SITE:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

[Application for Relative Caregiver Support Funding 2024](#)  
[DCF Grant Award Application Form](#)