



Division of Safety and Permanence DSP Informational Memo Series 2024-15i

October 14, 2024

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: John Elliott
 Administrator

Re: 2025 Federal Fiscal Year Relative Caregiver Support Funding Opportunity

Purpose:

Across the state of Wisconsin **only 40%** of children in out of home care are being raised by their relatives. Research shows that children experience better child welfare outcomes including greater placement stability, higher levels of permanency, and better behavioral and mental health outcomes when they are cared for by their relatives. Providing relative caregivers with direct support and equitable financial assistance is key to achieving these outcomes.

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:

DCF operates Wisconsin's title IV-B kinship navigator program. For FY 2018-2023, Congress set aside \$20 million in discretionary funding appropriated under title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Social Security Act to help title IV-E agencies develop, enhance, or evaluate their kinship navigator programs. Congress decreased the discretionary funding for IV-B, subpart 2 kinship navigator programs to \$10 million for FY2024. Therefore, the funds available to title IV-E agencies is significantly lower than previous



years. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) applied to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) for this funding in July 2023.

Information Summary:

ACF awarded DCF \$177,212 to use between October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. 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 passes, gas vouchers or grocery store cards, school 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 funds can also be used to promote normalcy and support the child and families' access to and participation in extracurricular, cultural, or family engagement activities.
- 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 with court fees, obtaining legal representation for or consultation on permanency options, , creating reasonable visitation plans, and preparing wills, or power of attorney documents.
- 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 by submitting a complete application that includes:

- DCF Grant Award Application Form - Application #437003-G25-0002472; and
- Attachment A: Application for Relative Caregiver Support Funding Federal Fiscal Year 2025.

All applications must be submitted to the Kinship Care Specialist via DCFDSPKinshipNavigator@wisconsin.gov **no later than 11:59 p.m. on December 8, 2024**. 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 semiannual summary report to DCF that outlines the grant programming activities for that time period and their effectiveness as measured by the agency. Agencies that are awarded this grant must agree to document expenses in SPARC monthly. Agencies that receive grant money shall use the funding they receive by September 30, 2025.

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>

ATTACHMENTS: [DCF Grant Award Application Form](#)
[Attachment A: Application for Relative Caregiver Support Funding Federal Fiscal Year 2025](#)