



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

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May 14, 2021

The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301



RE: Kinship Navigator Program Funding ACYF-CB-PI-21-06

Dear Co-Chairs:

Nature of Request

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) request permission to apply for the Kinship Navigator Program Funding being offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. Program Instructions ACYF-CB-PI-21-06 were issued on April 21, 2021. Request for funding must be submitted to the Regional federal office by; **May 28, 2021.**

The purpose of the funding is for one-time funding to support the development, enhancement or evaluation of kinship navigator programs. These are federal fiscal year (FY) 2021 funds, provided as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, enacted December 27, 2020 and utilized by September 30, 2022. The Oregon allocation is \$200,000.00 which is a minimally funded program.

There is NO match requirement for this grant.

Background

Starting in the Fall 2018 the federal office started issuing 12-month grant opportunities for states to develop, enhance or evaluate kinship navigator programs.

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"

Oregon has applied for these grants each year and have utilized the funding to develop the Oregon Kinship Navigator program which is accessible to any Oregon relative parenting another relatives' child(ren). Grandparents raising grandchildren is most often the individuals who are seeking out assistance.

<https://oregonkinshipnavigator.org/>.

The purpose of a Kinship Navigator Program is 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, and to promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregiver families are served.

Oregon Department of Human Services – Child Welfare provides services to approximately 2500 children who are formally placed with a Kinship family. Whereas the US Census for Oregon reports there are approximately 37,000 children in Oregon under the care of a relative. Most families who are accessing the services with the Oregon Kinship Navigator are those families who are not otherwise involved in public systems. The Oregon Kinship Navigator program design is intended to be a prevention service model. Allowing access and support to Kinship families well before the needs may arise requiring more intensive public system intervention.

While the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau has been issuing these one-year grant opportunities they have been seeking to find structured programs that can meet the standard of an Evidence Based Program. So far, no program in the country has met this standard. Oregon has been preparing to pivot our program toward an evidence-based model once identified.

Starting this Federal year 2021 they have changed the grant allocation methodology and Oregon was reduced to a minimally funded program. ACF-CB reported they made an error in allocations for the first three (3) years and are now making a course correction. Oregon allocation in 2020 was \$292,085.00. The new allocation for FY 2021 is \$200,000.00. As a result, we will need to limit the service enhancements such as educational training that we have been building out or seek alternative ways in which to provide them.

Action Requested

The Oregon Department of Human Services is requesting permission to apply for the Kinship Navigator Program Funding being offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. The Department request permission to apply for the full allocation of \$200,000.00.

State Legislation Affected

None

For additional information please contact Rebecca Jones Gaston, ODHS Child Welfare Director 503- 945-6637.

Sincerely,



Eric Luther Moore
ODHS Chief Financial Officer

cc: Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office
Gregory Jolivette, Legislative Fiscal Office
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Ali Webb, Department of Administrative Services
Mike Streepey, Department of Administrative Services

<h1>ACF</h1> Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration on Children, Youth and Families	
	1. Log No: ACYF-CB-PI-21-06	2. Issuance Date: April 21, 2021
	3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau	
	4. Key Words: MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program; Family First Prevention Services Act; Kinship Navigator Programs	

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: State, Tribal and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

SUBJECT: Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funding Available to Develop and Enhance or to Evaluate Kinship Navigator Programs

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Public Law (P.L.) 116-260, Division H of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, enacted December 27, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Program Instruction (PI) is to provide guidance to state, territorial and tribal title IV-E agencies on the actions required to apply for title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to support the development, enhancement or evaluation of kinship navigator programs. These are federal fiscal year (FY) 2021 funds, provided in P.L.116-260, Division H of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, enacted December 27, 2020.

BACKGROUND: The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), enacted as part of Public Law (P.L.) 115-123, amended the Social Security Act (the Act) to allow title IV-E agencies to receive funding for kinship navigator programs that meet certain criteria. The amendment at section 474(a)(7) of the Act authorized title IV-E agencies to claim 50 percent Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for allowable kinship navigator program costs beginning no earlier than October 1, 2018. On November 30, 2018, the Children's Bureau issued [ACYF-CB-PI-18-11](#) providing guidance on the requirements for participating in the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program.

As enacted in FFPSA, the law requires that programs funded under the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program must meet practice criteria of promising, supported, or well-supported in accordance with HHS criteria and be approved by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse (section 471(e)(4)(C) of the Act). The Prevention Services Clearinghouse

website¹ includes information on the kinship navigator program models that have been reviewed and rated. At this time, none of the reviewed kinship navigator program models have been determined to meet at least the promising practice criteria needed to meet section 474(a)(7) of the Act for allowable claiming under a title IV-E kinship navigator program. The Prevention Services Clearinghouse is continuing to review additional models.

To help title IV-E agencies prepare to participate in the new title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program funding option while program models eligible for title IV-E reimbursement are being identified, the Congress, through annual appropriations bills set aside \$20 million² in funding appropriated under title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Social Security Act in each of FYs 2018 - 2021. The funds are available to all states, as well as to territories and tribes directly operating the title IV-E Foster Care, Adoption Assistance and, if applicable, optional Guardianship Assistance and Prevention Services programs. The funds are to be used to develop, enhance or evaluate kinship navigator programs. The Children's Bureau previously issued guidance on how to apply for FY 2018, FY 2019 and FY 2020 kinship navigator funding and has made awards for those years. This PI provides guidance on how to apply for FY 2021 title IV-B, subpart 2 kinship navigator funding.

Division X of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* also included a provision that temporarily modifies the requirements for participating in the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program. That provision allows title IV-E agencies during the COVID-19 public health emergency period (from April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021) to claim 100 percent FFP for allowable kinship navigator program costs and temporarily waives the evidence-based standards during this period. On March 9, the Children's Bureau issue Program Instruction [ACYF-CB-PI-21-05](#) providing guidance on steps that title IV-E agencies must take to participate in the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program during the COVID-19 public health emergency period from April 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021.

INFORMATION ON FY 2021 TITLE IV-B, SUBPART 2 KINSHIP NAVIGATOR FUNDING:

Eligible Applicants: States, territories and tribes, directly operating a title IV-E program are eligible to apply for the FY 2021 title IV-B, subpart 2 annual appropriation to develop, enhance or evaluate kinship navigator programs. Eligible applicants are listed in the allotment table in Attachment A. Please direct any questions regarding eligibility to the appropriate Children's Bureau (CB) Regional Office (RO) (see Attachment C).

Estimated allotments: Grants will be distributed by formula to all title IV-E agencies that apply for funding, using allocation statistics also used for the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, authorized under title IV-B, subpart 2. See Attachment A for estimated allotments. If any eligible applicants choose not to apply, funds will be reallocated by formula to all other eligible applicants approved for funding.

¹ Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse website <https://preventionservices.abtsites.com>.

² Five percent, (\$1 million) of the appropriation is reserved for federal research, evaluation and technical assistance activities, leaving \$19 million available for kinship navigator grants.

States and Territorial Title IV-E Agencies: The allotment is based on the average monthly number of children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, with a minimum award of \$200,000.

Tribal Title IV-E Agencies: The allotment is based on the tribal population count of children and youth under age 21, with a minimum award of \$25,000 per tribe. ACF will use the tribal population counts already received and approved for the FY 2021 title IV-B grant awards, so there is no need for tribes to submit new population counts for this award.

Please note that for FY 2021, ACF has revised its methodology for allotting funds to more accurately reflect the formula specified in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. In the past, ACF first provided each state or tribe with the applicable minimum award (\$200,000 for states and territories and \$25,000 for tribes) as a base amount and allotted additional funds according to the specified formula. For FY 2021, ACF has allotted funds in a manner that first distributes funds by the formula and then, for any state or tribe falling below the minimum, raises the allotment to the minimum award. Therefore, FY 2021 allotments may be either higher or lower than the amounts that states and tribes received in previous years.

Approved Activities: Title IV-E agencies may use these funds to develop, enhance or evaluate kinship navigator programs, as described in section 427(a)(1) of the Social Security Act, as follows:

(1) a kinship navigator program 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, and to promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregiver families are served, which program—

(A) shall be coordinated with other State or local agencies that promote service coordination or provide information and referral services, including the entities that provide 2-1-1 or 3-1-1 information systems where available, to avoid duplication or fragmentation of services to kinship care families;

(B) shall be planned and operated in consultation with kinship caregivers and organizations representing them, youth raised by kinship caregivers, relevant government agencies, and relevant community-based or faith based organizations;

(C) shall establish information and referral systems that link (via toll-free access) kinship caregivers, kinship support group facilitators, and kinship service providers to—

(i) each other;

(ii) eligibility and enrollment information for Federal, State, and local benefits;

(iii) relevant training to assist kinship caregivers in caregiving and in obtaining benefits and services; and

(iv) relevant legal assistance and help in obtaining legal services;

(D) shall provide outreach to kinship care families, including by establishing, distributing, and updating a kinship care website, or other relevant guides or outreach materials;

(E) shall promote partnerships between public and private agencies, including schools, community based or faith-based organizations, and relevant government agencies, to increase their knowledge of the needs of kinship care families and other individuals who are willing and able to be foster parents for children in foster care under the responsibility of the State who are themselves parents to promote better services for those families;

(F) may establish and support a kinship care ombudsman with authority to intervene and help kinship caregivers access services; and

(G) may support any other activities designed to assist kinship caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to improve their caregiving.

CB also reminds title IV-E agencies that we have determined that use of these funds to provide concrete supports and brief legal services for families is allowable, consistent with section 427(a)(1) of the Act, as follows:

- CB has clarified that kinship navigator funds appropriated under title IV-B, subpart 2 may be used for concrete supports, such as to purchase 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.
- CB has also determined that grantees may use kinship navigator funds provided under title IV-B, subpart 2 to provide brief legal services 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 “support[ing] any other activities designed to assist kinship caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to improve their caregiving.”

Project Period: The FY 2021 kinship navigator funds appropriated under title IV-B, subpart 2 must be spent on activities conducted between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2022.

Match: There is no match requirement.

Financial Reporting Requirements: Title IV-E agencies are required to submit an electronic SF-425 for the title IV-B, subpart 2 kinship navigator grant through the Payment Management System (PMS). For more information on gaining access to and using the PMS system, please contact the PMS Help Desk at 1- 877-614-5533 or for more information see <https://pms.psc.gov>.

Title IV-E agencies must submit the SF-425 for expenditures under the title IV-B, subpart 2 kinship navigator grant at the end of each 12-month period (October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021 and October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022) of the two-year expenditure period. Each

report is due 90 days after the end of each federal fiscal year (December 29). The SF-425 covering the first 12-month budget period is the interim report and the report covering the entire grant period is the final report. The title IV-E agency must obligate the funds by September 30, 2022 and liquidate them by December 29, 2022. Note that while the kinship navigator formula grant funding was provided through the appropriation for title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Act, these reports must be submitted separately from reports filed for the MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. A negative grant award will recoup any unobligated and/or unliquidated funds reported on the final SF-425 for the kinship navigator grant.

INSTRUCTIONS: Each title IV-E agency applying for funds must submit the following information to CB by **no later than May 28, 2021**.

- *FY 2021 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form:* Complete the FY 2021 Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form (Attachment B), signed by an authorized official from the state or tribe. Please also include information on an agency representative to contact for any programmatic questions on the submission.
- *Kinship Navigator Funding Programmatic Narrative.* Provide a brief narrative outlining the activities that will be carried out using the FY 2021 title IV-B, subpart 2 kinship navigator funds. The funds may be used to develop, enhance and/or evaluate kinship navigator programs, consistent with the specifications described in section 427(a)(1) of the Act.

The Children’s Bureau encourages agencies to consider how funds might be used to enhance the evidence base available for kinship navigator programs. Title IV-E agencies choosing to use these funds to evaluate a kinship navigator program are urged to ensure that the evaluation is appropriate for consideration in the review of kinship navigator programs by the Prevention Services Clearinghouse (see [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards and Procedures](#)). Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to document the evaluation methodology, study design and findings of its kinship navigator program. The Prevention Services Clearinghouse reviews and assesses studies on the basis of study design, overall and differential sample attrition, the equivalence of intervention and comparison groups at baseline (as applicable), and when necessary, procedures accounting for clustering. The Prevention Services Clearinghouse will also review how the study accounts for confounding factors and examines at least one “target outcome” (see [ACYF-CB-PI-18-11](#), Attachment C, Study Eligibility Criteria) using a measure that is reliable and achieves face validity. Domains of kinship navigator program target outcomes include (a) Child Safety, (b) Child Permanency, (c) Child Well-Being, (d) Adult Well-Being, (e) Access to Services, (f) Referral to Services, and/or (g) Satisfaction with Programs and Services.³ Additionally to be eligible for the review by the Prevention Services Clearinghouse kinship navigator programs must also have a

³ Operational definitions for the eligible target outcomes are provided in Section 4.1.5 in the *Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse Handbook and Procedures*.

book, manual, or other available documentation that specifies the components of the practice protocol and describes how to administer the practice.

- *Submissions*: Submit the FY 2021 Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form (Attachment B) and the Kinship Navigator Funding Programmatic Narrative electronically (by email) to the appropriate Children’s Bureau Regional Office (see Attachment C for list of Regional Program Managers). Please note that the Children’s Bureau has created new resource email boxes for each CB Regional Office to receive plan submissions (e.g., CBRegion1@acf.hhs.gov; CBRegion2@acf.hhs.gov; etc.) See Attachment C for details. Please submit the application for FY 2021 kinship navigator funding to the new resource mailbox, rather than sending to the personal email address of the Regional Program Manager or other staff. Please also send a copy to Liliana Hernandez in the Children’s Bureau Central Office at liliana.hernandez@acf.hhs.gov.
- *Progress Reporting*: Title IV-E agencies will also be required to provide an update on their use of these funds and accomplishments in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) submission that will be due June 30, 2022.

Paperwork Reduction Act:

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The Control Number for this OMB approved information collection is 0970-0426, approved through September 30, 2023.

Inquiries To: Children’s Bureau Regional Program Managers

/s/

Amanda Barlow
Acting Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Attachment A: Eligible Applicants and Estimated Allotments
Attachment B: FY 2021 Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form
Attachment C: Children’s Bureau Regional Program Managers

Department of Human Services Webb

Request: The Oregon Department of Human Services requests authorization to apply for the Kinship Navigator Program Funding grant from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau in the amount of \$200,000 for the development, enhancement or evaluation of kinship navigator programs.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Kinship navigator programs are meant to assist families who provide care and support to children to prevent them from entering the child welfare system. The Department has the opportunity to apply for a Kinship Navigator Program Funding grant of \$200,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau (ACY-CB) for federal fiscal year 2021, as provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. The Department became aware of the grant on April 21, 2021 and the application is due on May 28, 2021. The Department expects to be notified of the award by mid-July 2021 and funds must be expended by September 30, 2022.

The Department has received grant funds for prior federal fiscal years and previously identified several uses of the funds, including establishing a virtual Basic Service Center and contracting with Greater Oregon Behavioral Health to implement the kinship navigator program in rural areas. Previous implementation plans were based on annual grant funding of approximately \$289,000, which was the amount of the federal fiscal year 2020 award. Due to a change in the grant allocation methodology, ACY-CB discovered a calculation error and adjusted Oregon to a minimally funded amount of \$200,000 for federal fiscal year 2021. The grant does not require a state fund match. It is worth noting, because the amount of grant funding has been reduced from the original annual amount, the original implementation plan needs to be adjusted to limit service enhancements or additional funding needs to be identified to implement the program according to the original plan.

Analysis
Oregon Department of Human Services
Kinship Navigator Grant

Analyst: Gregory Jolivette

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application in the amount of \$200,000 by the Oregon Department of Human Services, to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau for the development, enhancement, or evaluation of kinship navigator programs.

Analysis: Kinship Navigator programs offer information, referral, and follow-up services to grandparents and other relatives raising children to link them to the benefits and services they or the children need. In 2020, Oregon received a federal grant of \$292,085 to establish the Oregon Kinship Navigator Program. The agency expected to continue to receive this amount; however, due to a change in the federal funding formula, in 2021 ODHS will be receiving only \$200,000 for the program. As such, the agency will have to either scale back the program or identify funds to make up the difference. Most of the funds are used to contract with Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc for administration of the program.

The grant does not require a state match. The application is due on May 28, 2021. The department expects to be notified of the award by mid-July 2021.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends approval of the request.