

KINSHIP CAREGIVER NAVIGATOR PROGRAM ACT
Act of Oct. 23, 2018, P.L. 591, No. 89

Cl. 67

An Act

Establishing the Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program in the Department of Human Services; and providing for kinship caregiver navigator website and for kinship caregiver navigators.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Area agency on aging." The single local agency designated within a planning and service area by the Department of Aging to develop and administer the delivery of a comprehensive and coordinated plan of social services and activities for older adults.

"Child." An individual under 18 years of age.

"Contractor." An organization that is awarded a contract by the department to establish the Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program.

"County agency." A county children and youth social service agency under the act of June 24, 1937 (P.L.2017, No.396), known as the County Institution District Law, and supervised by the department under Article IX of the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code.

"Department." The Department of Human Services of the Commonwealth.

"Kinship caregiver." An individual who:

- (1) is at least 21 years of age;
- (2) lives with and is responsible for the care of a child; and
- (3) is related within the fifth degree of consanguinity or affinity to the parent or stepparent of the child.

"Kinship caregiver navigator." An individual who has been trained by the department to understand the various State agency systems serving kinship caregivers and assist in accessing Federal, State and local services and supports available to kinship caregivers.

"Program." The Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program established by this act.

"Website." The kinship caregiver navigator website created and maintained by the contractor.

Section 3. Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program.

(a) Establishment.--

(1) The Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program is established in the department.

(2) The department shall develop a proposal and solicit a contractor to administer the program. Any person determined eligible by the department may submit a proposal. The department shall enter into a contract or agreement with the person whose proposal has been selected to administer the program.

(b) Minimum criteria.--The contractor shall, at a minimum:

(1) Create and maintain a website pursuant to section 4.

(2) Create and maintain a kinship caregiver toll-free telephone number or hotline to provide supportive listening and guidance to kinship caregivers or persons who intend to become kinship caregivers.

(3) Develop and provide training for individuals to serve as kinship caregiver navigators.

(4) Educate the public on services and supports available to kinship caregivers, including developing and administering a Statewide marketing campaign. The contractor may coordinate with other State and county agencies, area agencies on aging, local education agencies and community organizations to assist in disseminating information.

Section 4. Kinship caregiver navigator website.

(a) General rule.--The contractor shall develop a kinship caregiver navigator website that provides information on supports and services available to current kinship caregivers and prospective kinship caregivers.

(b) Required information.--The website shall include information, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Federal and State programs.

(2) Support groups for kinship caregivers and children in the kinship caregiver's care.

(3) Respite services for kinship caregivers.

(4) Financial aid.

(5) Relevant legal resources and assistance.

(6) Education and supportive services for children.

(7) Training for current and prospective kinship caregivers.

(8) The toll-free telephone number established under section 3(b)(2).

(c) Live chat feature.--The website may include a live chat feature.

(d) Feedback and suggestions.--The website shall include a section for individuals to provide feedback and make suggestions.

Section 5. Kinship caregiver navigators.

A kinship caregiver navigator shall:

(1) Assist kinship caregivers with finding information for relevant Federal and State benefits, local supports and services.

(2) Mediate with State agency staff or service providers and, when necessary, assist in establishing relationships between kinship caregivers and relevant Federal and State agency staff.

(3) Work with the local area agency on aging and county agency to identify and provide outreach to kinship caregivers in need of additional services.

(4) Refer kinship caregivers to the appropriate county agency contact.

Section 6. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 180 days.