

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration on Children, Youth and Families	
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	3. Originating Office: Children's Bureau	
	4. Key Words: Family First Prevention Services Act, Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Programs	

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

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

SUBJECT: Requirements for Participating in the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act), as amended by Public Law (P.L.) 115-123, enacted February 9, 2018.

PURPOSE: To instruct title IV-E agencies on the requirements for participating in the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program.

INFORMATION: The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), enacted as part of Public Law (P.L.) 115-123, amended 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 authorizes 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. This program instruction provides instructions on how title IV-E agencies may participate in this new title IV-E program.

Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program Requirements

To qualify for funding under the title IV-E Kinship Navigator program, the program implemented by a title IV-E agency must meet the requirements described in section 427(a)(1) of the 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.”

Practice Criteria for Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Programs

Programs funded under the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program must also meet practice criteria of promising, supported, or well-supported in accordance with HHS criteria and be approved by HHS (section 471(e)(4)(C) of the Act). The same practice criteria are being used for the new Title IV-E Prevention and Family Services and Programs and the Kinship Navigator Program. The practice criteria are provided in Attachment C.

The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse is in the process of reviewing and rating services and programs for HHS approval. Attachment C includes an initial list of the services and programs, including kinship navigator programs that the Clearinghouse will evaluate under the HHS practice criteria. We expect the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse to complete reviewing and rating the services and programs in Attachment C in the spring of 2019. We will provide additional information regarding approved services and programs, and the selection of additional services and programs for evaluation in future issuances.

Child and Family Eligibility for Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Programs

Children in kinship care arrangements and their families are eligible for services under the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program, without regard to whether the child is currently, or is potentially, eligible for title IV-E foster care maintenance payments (section 474(a)(7) of the Act). There also is no requirement that the child be determined to meet the definition of a foster care candidate to be eligible for services.

A title IV-E agency has discretion to determine the scope of the population to be served through its Kinship Navigator program, including children being cared for by kin in foster care or legal guardianship arrangements, children at risk of entering foster care being cared for by kin, and children being cared for by kin outside of the child welfare system.

The statute does not define “kinship caregiver” for purposes of this program. Therefore, the title IV-E agency may serve families headed by a grandparent or other relative as well as tribal kin, extended family and friends, or other ‘fictive kin’ who are caring for children.

Geographic Scope of Services

A title IV-E agency is not required to operate the Kinship Navigator program in all counties and geographic locations in the state or tribal service area, but we encourage title IV-E agencies to implement the program as broadly as possible in order to make Kinship Navigator services available to as many families in need of those services as possible.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TITLE IV-E KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAMS:

Title IV-E Plan Attachment for Kinship Navigator Program

To begin participation in the title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program, a title IV-E agency must submit an attachment to its title IV-E plan (see Title IV-E Plan Pre-Print Attachment XII found at Attachment B of this PI) that specifies the Kinship Navigator model it has chosen to implement, the date on which the provision of program services began or will begin, and that provides an assurance that the model meets the requirements of section 427(a)(1) of the Act. The selected program model must have been identified by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse as meeting promising, supported, or well-supported practice criteria.

The title IV-E agency must also provide a brief narrative describing:

- the target population and service area for the program;
- how the title IV-E agency plans to implement the kinship navigator program (e.g., directly or through contracted service providers);
- how the program is coordinated with other state or local agencies that promote service coordination or provide information and referral services; and
- how the development and operation of the program has been and will be informed by consultation with kinship caregivers and organizations representing them, youth raised by

kinship caregivers, relevant government agencies, and relevant community-based or faith based organizations.

The title IV-E agency may submit the Pre-Print Attachment XII for a Kinship Navigator Program at any time. If the title IV-E agency with an approved Kinship Navigator Program elects to change its Kinship Navigator model or if the title IV-E agency expands the Kinship Navigator program to be statewide or in a different service area, the title IV-E agency must resubmit an updated attachment to the title IV-E plan. The title IV-E agency must submit the updated attachment no later than the end of the calendar quarter in which the stated program changes are to be in effect.

Federal Financial Participation

As provided for in Section 474(a)(7) of the Act, title IV-E funding is available for program services and administration for the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program, provided certain requirements are met, as delineated at Section 427(a)(1) of the Act. Title IV-E expenditures for the program are reimbursable at the 50 percent FFP rate and may begin for periods starting no earlier than October 1, 2018 once the Children's Bureau (CB) approves the agency as operating a Kinship Navigator program that meets all program requirements.

Title IV-E agencies that elect to operate a Title IV-E Kinship Navigator program must submit a title IV-E plan Pre-Print Attachment XII (found at Attachment B of this PI). This submission must identify the date on which title IV-E costs for program operations involving provision of services to families began or will begin. Title IV-E claiming of Kinship Navigator program costs may not begin until the quarter in which such a submission is made. Once such an attachment is approved by the CB, title IV-E claims for allowable costs may be submitted for prospective and past periods no earlier than October 1, 2018 as identified in the title IV-E plan attachment. Please note that any prior quarter adjustment title IV-E claims are subject to the time limit for claiming as per federal regulations at 45 CFR 95.7 (i.e., the agency must submit the claim within 2 years after the calendar quarter in which the title IV-E agency made the expenditure).

All administrative costs must be allocable to the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program in accordance with an approved or pending public assistance cost allocation plan under Federal regulations at 45 CFR Part 95 Subpart E – Cost Allocation Plans (States) or an approved child welfare cost allocation methodology and a negotiated indirect cost rate (Tribes). Examples of activities constituting administrative costs are those for program policy development in compliance with Section 427(a)(1) of the Act and operational support activities centralized in the grantee department or in some other agency such as procurement; payroll; personnel functions; management, maintenance and operation of space and property; data processing and computer services; accounting; budgeting; auditing. Any expenditures incurred for the development, delivery or participation in training by eligible staff and the staff of State/Tribe licensed or approved child welfare agencies providing title IV-E kinship navigator services to or on behalf of eligible clients are also reimbursable at the 50 percent FFP rate.

Administrative costs for the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator program may not begin until the quarter in which provision of services through a program model meeting the practice criteria has begun. Title IV-E agencies should note that Congress has provided special funding in FYs 2018

and 2019 under title IV-B to support the development, enhancement or evaluation of kinship navigator programs. See Program Instruction [ACYF-CB-PI-18-05](#) for further information on the kinship navigator funding made available in FY 2018. Guidance on how to apply for the FY 2019 title IV-B kinship navigator funding will be issued separately.

Financial Reporting

Expenditures and next quarter estimates for title IV-E Kinship Navigator Programs are reported on the CB-496 form. The revised form and specific instructions for reporting such costs can be found in ACYF-CB-PI-18-12.

Inquiries To: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

/s/

Jerry Milner
Acting Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Attachment A

Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

Attachment B

Title IV-E Plan Pre-Print Attachment XII - Kinship Navigator Program

Attachment C

HHS Initial practice criteria and first list of services and programs selected for review as part of the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse