

<h1>ACF</h1> <p>Administration for Children and Families</p>	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: 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 2020 Title IV-B, subpart 2 Funding Available to Develop and Enhance or to Evaluate Kinship Navigator Programs

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, Division A of Public Law (P.L.) 116-94, the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020; Title IV-B, subpart 2 and Title IV-E of the Social Security Act; the Family First Prevention Services Act within Division E, Title VII of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123).

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) 2020 funds, provided in P.L. 116-94, Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, enacted December 20, 2019.

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 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. 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.

To be eligible for title IV-E funding, 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.

On December 20, 2019, the Children's Bureau issued another program instruction, [ACYF-CB-PI-19-07](#), providing instructions on how a title IV-E agency may claim transitional payments for kinship navigator program services and associated costs under the title IV-E kinship navigator program until the Clearinghouse can review and rate a program, if a title IV-E agency submits sufficient documentation, as outlined in that PI, by October 1, 2021.

To help title IV-E agencies prepare to participate in the new title IV-E kinship navigator funding option while programs eligible for title IV-E reimbursement are being identified, Congress, through the 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, 2019 and 2020. 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 and FY 2019 kinship navigator funding and has made awards for those years. The current PI provides guidance on how to apply for FY 2020 funding.

INFORMATION ON FY 2020 KINSHIP NAVIGATOR FUNDING:

Eligible Applicants: States, territories and tribes directly operating a title IV-E program are eligible to apply for the FY 2020 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 2020 title IV-B grant awards, so there is no need for tribes to submit new population counts for this award.

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.

Project Period: The FY 2020 Kinship Navigator grant must be spent on activities conducted between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021.

Match: There is no match requirement.

Financial Reporting Requirements: Title IV-E agencies are required to submit an electronic SF-425 for the 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 Kinship Navigator grant at the end of each 12-month period (October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020 and October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021) 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, 2021 and liquidate them by December 29, 2021. Note that while the Kinship Navigator 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 April 3, 2020**.

- *FY 2020 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form:* Complete the FY 2020 Kinship Navigator Program 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 Program Narrative.* Provide a brief narrative outlining the activities that will be carried out using the FY 2020 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. Because some title IV-E agencies may have limited experience in operating kinship navigator programs and will use funds to begin developing or enhancing capacity, programs supported using the FY 2020 Kinship Navigator funds need not meet every aspect of the description contained in section 427(a)(1) during the project period as long as the programs are designed to ultimately fulfill the 427(a)(1) requirements. (Programs will be required to meet all requirements of sections 427(a)(1) and 474(a)(7) in order to qualify for title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program funding. Please see [ACYF-CB-PI-18-11](#) for additional information on the requirements for title IV-E funding.)

The Children’s Bureau also 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 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 2020 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form (Attachment B) and the Kinship Navigator Program Narrative electronically (by email) to the appropriate Children’s Bureau Regional Office (see Attachment C for list of Regional Program Managers) with a copy submitted 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, 2021.

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 January 31, 2021.

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*.

Inquiries To: Children's Bureau Regional Program Managers

/s/

Elizabeth Darling
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth
and Families

Attachment A: Eligible Applicants and Estimated Allotments

Attachment B: FY 2020 Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Kinship Navigator Funding Request Form

Attachment C: CB Regional Program Managers