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North Dakota offers new Kinship-ND program to provide short-term support for caregivers of children whose parents are unable to care for them

BISMARCK, N.D. – Sometimes parents are unable to care for their children, and close relatives and other significant adults step in to provide care and stability for children – often assuming caregiving roles quickly and unexpectedly. The North Dakota Department of Human Services is now offering a new source of support for these caregivers: the Kinship-ND program.

Nationally, about four percent of children live in households that do not include their parents. Most of the caregivers in these households are grandparents and other relatives.¹

“When children and teens cannot remain living with parents, living with a relative or other adult with whom a child has a significant relationship can reduce trauma during a difficult situation. This in turn can improve child well-being, school performance, and can build stronger family and community connections,” said Christiana Pond, the Kinship-ND project navigator for the department’s Children and Family Services Division.

Qualifying caregivers include North Dakota residents who are relatives, members of a tribe, godparents, stepparents or other adults who have a relationship with the child and who provide full-time care of the child.

Pond said, the Kinship-ND program fills immediate, short-term needs, while helping caregivers navigate available services and programs.

It does not replace other existing public assistance programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Kinship Care, which provides ongoing financial help to qualifying households. Some caregivers may qualify for both Kinship-ND and the TANF Kinship Care programs.

“We connect caregivers to resources supporting stability and addressing unique needs such as the guardianship establishment process, help with budgeting, parenting strategies, understanding an Individual Education Plan and other educational supports, and other individualized needs,” Pond said. “We can also reimburse caregivers up to \$300 for groceries and \$300 for clothing and other supplies they may need when a child joins their household.”

Licensed foster parents who are related to a child in their care do not qualify for financial help through the program, but receive reimbursement through North Dakota’s foster care program.

-MORE-

Kinship-ND program offers caregivers resources and financial help – Page 2

The program is already serving 60 households. Caregivers do not have to be working with a human service zone or tribal social service office to participate.

For more information, including resources and support, caregivers are encouraged to visit www.KinshipND.com or to contact Pond at 701-328-1453 and kinship@nd.gov.

The Kinship-ND program is funded through the federal Children’s Bureau and authorized in the 2018 federal Family First Prevention Services Act.

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Source:

¹ <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren19/family1.asp>

CONTACT:

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892
lklawrence@nd.gov