

Kinship Care and COVID-19 Grandparents and other Kin on the Front Line during this Pandemic

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Heightened Challenges for Kinship Families During COVID-19

Food and Supplies

- Can't shop safely
- No-touch pick-up and delivery of health care supplies, food and other necessities
- More funds available through SNAP, and some communities responding with resources – more is needed

Financial Assistance

- Lost jobs and retirement savings are plummeting
- Need help to meet the needs of the children through increased TANF, foster care maintenance payments, stimulus payments and other federal supports

Technology and Virtual Support

- Learning, health care, social outlets are all virtual
- Communities responding with help accessing the internet and technology for tele-health needs, children's distance learning, and virtual support groups

Child Welfare System Issues

- How to safely comply with visitation orders with parents and other family members
- Home visits and other challenges to licensing
- Allow for virtual visitation, waive licensing requirements, pay kin during provisional licensing

Alternative Care Plans

- Legal help is expensive and hard to find
- Plans are needed for the children in the event of the caregiver's disability or death
- Engage the legal community to help

Summary of CARES Act



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CARES Act and Grandfamilies April 2020

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act known as the "CARES Act" authorized more than \$2 trillion to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals, governments, nonprofit organizations and for profit industries. The Act, passed March 27th, 2020, is the third package passed by Congress in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. There are about 2.7 million children living in grandfamilies - families in which grandparents, other adult family members or close family friends are raising children with no parents in the home. This public health crisis is highlighting the unique vulnerabilities of these families and the systems barriers they face to secure their household's health and economic stability. The following summary provides a breakdown of the law's new funding as it pertains to grandfamilies; state and local government agencies that may serve grandfamilies; and nonprofits that are working to support grandfamilies.

The new law heavily expands funding for existing programs, but does not address many of the barriers that currently exist. Many of the programs receiving increased funds offer the potential to serve grandfamilies if advocates make local decision makers aware of the unique needs of the families in the midst of the pandemic. There will also be opportunities in the coming weeks and months to advocate for more support for grandfamilies in additional federal legislation. Stay tuned to www.gu.org to get more details in the coming weeks.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING ADULTS AND DEPENDENTS IN GRANDFAMILIES

Recovery Rebates provide direct payments to individuals with incomes up to \$99,000 (\$198,000 married) who are not dependents. Adults with adjusted gross incomes under \$75,000 (\$150,000 married) will receive \$1,200 (\$2,400 married) and an additional \$500 per child under the age of 17. Payments will be decreased by \$5 for each additional \$100 earned until \$99,000 (\$198,000 married) at which point payments phase out entirely. Individuals with non-taxable means-tested benefits such as SSI are eligible for the rebates. Rebates are expected to be released starting April 6, 2020. Details regarding eligibility of grandfamilies and dependents within these families are being clarified by Generations United. Please check back at www.gu.org/covid-19/ as those details are more clearly defined in the coming weeks.

CARES Act Summary

CARES Act is intended to help families, including kinship families with heightened needs due to the pandemic. Categories of support:

- ▶ Stimulus payments - caregivers and their dependents
- ▶ **Flexible funding to each state, tribe, territory** -
 - ✓ Ohio receiving \$4.5 million (\$3.7 million to the state and \$775,000 to local communities with populations over 500,000 people) for expenses due to the pandemic
 - ✓ Ohio receiving share of \$3 billion through Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund
- ▶ **Support for specific programs** - child welfare, education, head start, COVID-19 testing, emergency food assistance, SNAP, Telehealth and Rural Health Clinics, Housing, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Older Americans Act programs, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program
- ▶ **Help to nonprofits serving grandfamilies** - tax credits, loans, and lowered cost for unemployment compensation

Additional National Efforts to Respond to COVID-19

- ▶ Federal Children's Bureau guidance, www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/covid-19-resources:
 - [ACYF-CB-IM-20-06](#)
 - ✓ Emphasizes that voices of families must be included in all aspects of child welfare reform
 - ✓ Preference for placing children with relatives and reasons why
 - ✓ Consider birth parents and foster parents (kin and non-kin) as mutual resources
 - [ACYF-CB-PI-20-10](#)
 - ✓ Federal child welfare money can now be used to pay foster care maintenance payment rates during provisional licensing
 - ✓ Extend foster care maintenance payments for youth over age 18 with simplified process (Ohio is extending)
 - ✓ May modify requirement to meet educational and employment requirements for youth over age 18 (Ohio is modifying)
- ▶ Additional federal money for **National Family Caregiver Support Program** and no more cap
- ▶ Advocacy underway to ensure additional funds for kinship navigators, **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** and other supports

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Supporting Grandfamilies through the COVID-19 Crisis

April 2020

Nearly 1 in 10 children live in households headed by a grandparent or other relative. These families are commonly known as grandfamilies or kinship families. Before the current COVID-19 crisis, opioid abuse has been forcing many children to be raised in grandfamilies. This has left caregivers and communities to simultaneously navigate two crises. However, these compounding challenges are often overlooked in communities, but local leaders can help. The following highlights actions local decision makers can take to support grandfamilies during these crises.

Grandfamilies in your Community

Grandfamilies, while most often headed by a grandparent, can also be an aunt, uncle, older sibling or close family friend that steps in when a parent is unable to care for the child(ren). The reasons vary including parental death, illness, substance use, mental illness, military deployment, incarceration, divorce, deportation, job loss, or out of state employment.

Regardless of the situation, children fare better in the care of their relatives compared to non-relative care. They have more stability, are more likely to maintain connections with siblings, preserve their cultural heritage and community bonds. Grandfamilies keep millions of children with family and out of an overburdened foster care system and saves taxpayers more than \$4 billion each year. Overburdened child welfare system would be completely overwhelmed.



1 in 10

children live in households headed by a grandparent or other relative

Grandfamilies are Vulnerable

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, grandfamilies faced barriers to housing, health care, food, and financial assistance. The current crisis has heightened the fragility of these households. Grandfamily caregivers, because of their age and/or underlying health conditions, are at high risk for contracting coronavirus and suffering severe health consequences or death. They are unable to visit stores or other community resources without risk of exposure to COVID-19. They're struggling to get food, medical supplies, and computers, internet connectivity, and special education services so children can learn at home, along with the lack of respite and child care that school time had provided to caregivers. Many who were working are losing full or part time jobs. And older caregivers often use their retirement savings to pay for the children's needs. Now those savings are plummeting. Also, if grandfamily caregivers do become sick, it leaves the children with few options other than foster care.

Local leaders can develop a comprehensive approach to help mitigate these risks by connecting grandfamilies to:

- food and supplies;
- accurate information from people they trust;
- help with supporting the children's educational and special needs at home;
- financial assistance;
- technology support for telehealth, distance learning, and to reduce isolation;
- respite care and assistance making alternative care plans for children.

Leave Behind for Local Decisionmakers

Local Leave Behind

- ▶ [Leave behind advocacy tool for local decisionmakers](#) provides background information on grandfamilies' needs and strengths (a more comprehensive background piece if needed is here -www.gu.org/resources/grandfamilies-strengths-and-challenges-fact-sheet/)
- ▶ Complements the CARES Act Summary by listing top priorities for local decisionmakers to support grandfamilies using CARES Act funds or other COVID-19 response dollars within these categories:
 - ✓ Food and Supplies
 - ✓ Financial Assistance and Housing
 - ✓ Technology and Internet Access
 - ✓ Personal Supports and Planning

Meeting with a State or Local Decisionmaker

- ▶ Identify and research state and local decisionmakers
- ▶ Find your state representatives here: https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/
 - ✓ Set up a meeting
 - ✓ Learn more about the decisionmaker
 - ✓ Prepare for and conduct the meeting
 - Strategically share your story/impact of COVID on grandfamilies
 - Ways they can help
 - Share materials and plans for follow up
 - ✓ Follow up with a thank you and any additional materials

Additional Resources



NEED HELP?

See State Fact Sheets to obtain important state specific kinship resources, information and data.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Search Laws

A searchable database of laws and legislation affecting grandfamilies both inside and outside the foster care system for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

[Read More](#)



Resources

Free and online legal resources in support of grandfamilies within and outside the child welfare system.

[Read More](#)



Publications

View our publications that support grandfamilies including: Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards, Using the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP), and Relative Foster Care Licensing Waivers in States.

[Read More](#)

We believe in a world that values and engages all generations.

[More About Our Mission](#)



Take Action! Help Grandfamilies Face COVID-19 Challenges

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Resources for Grandfamilies

www.gu.org/covid-19/



COVID-19 Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families

Our country and the world are facing a pandemic unlike any of us have seen before. People over the age of 60 and those with compromised immune systems are among the highest-risk populations COVID-19 is impacting. While grandparents are being advised to isolate themselves physically from grandchildren, it is nearly impossible for older caregivers to distance themselves from the children they are raising. You are on the front line for your family every day. Today's challenges are making it much tougher to care for them. It's important to stay calm and do everything you can to stay healthy, informed and connected. Here are a few suggestions.

Finding Factual, Up to Date Information

Center for Disease Control (CDC): The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has up to date, accurate information and recommendations about COVID-19.

- **General Information:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 and Children:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>
- **Older Adults and Medical Conditions:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
- **CDC Guidance for Workplace, School, and Home:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

World Health Organization (WHO): Useful information can be accessed at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

County Health Department: Contact your state's <https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory> to learn more about your state's response and recommendations.

Kinship Navigators and Other Grandfamilies Support Programs: For information specifically to help grandfamilies, contact your local kinship navigator or other grandfamilies support programs. Visit www.grandfamilies.org for a list of local programs in your state.

Area Agency on Aging: For information to help older caregivers contact your area agency on aging. You can find them through the eldercare locator at 1-800-677-1116 or visit eldercare.acl.gov



Hoja informativa de COVID-19 para familias lideradas por abuelos y otros parientes ("grandfamilies") y familias multigeneracionales

Nuestro país y el mundo se enfrentan a una pandemia como nunca antes la habíamos visto. Las personas mayores de 60 años y aquellas con sistemas inmunes comprometidos se encuentran entre las poblaciones de mayor riesgo a las que COVID-19 está impactando. Si bien se aconseja a los abuelos que se aislen físicamente de los nietos, es casi imposible para los cuidadores mayores distanciarse de los niños que están criando. Usted está en primera línea para su familia todos los días. Los desafíos de hoy hacen que sea mucho más difícil cuidarlos. Es importante mantener la calma y hacer todo lo posible para mantenerse saludable, informado y conectado. Aquí le presentamos algunas sugerencias.

Encontrar información actualizada y objetiva

Centro para el Control de Enfermedades (CDC): El Centro para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades tiene información actualizada y precisa, y recomendaciones sobre COVID-19.

- **Información general:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Preguntas frecuentes sobre COVID-19 y los niños:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>
- **Adultos mayores y condiciones médicas:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS): Se puede acceder a información útil en: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Departamento de salud del condado: Comuníquese con su departamento de salud local para obtener más información sobre las respuestas y recomendaciones de su estado.

Navegadores de parentesco ("kinship navigators") y otros programas de apoyo a las familias lideradas por abuelos y otros parientes: Para obtener información específica para ayudar a las familias lideradas por abuelos y otros parientes, comuníquese con su navegador de parentesco local u otros programas de apoyo a las grandes familias. Visite www.grandfamilies.org (inglés) para obtener una lista de los programas locales en su estado.

Agencia local sobre el envejecimiento: Para obtener información para ayudar a los cuidadores mayores, comuníquese con la agencia local sobre el envejecimiento. Puede encontrarlos a través del localizador de cuidado de mayores llamando al 1-800-677-1116.



Questions?

Contact information



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