

Washington State Kinship Care

House Bill 1121 (Permanent Legal Custody) allowed relatives to go into court, get custody, and not terminate parental rights.

Legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 in TANF funding (biennium) creating the **Relative Support Services Fund** for unlicensed kinship care families involved in the child welfare system and \$50,000 to study the issue of kinship care in Washington State and make recommendations.

- House Bill 1233 requires development of a stronger relative search process for families in the child welfare system, the creation of a statewide **Kinship Oversight Committee (KCOC)** to oversee kinship care activities, and development of two
 - Kinship Navigator** pilot projects to help kinship families navigate the service system by offering information and referral, advocacy, and support.
 - Annual **Parenting The Second Time Around** (developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension) facilitator training begins.

- Substitute House Bill 1280 continues the Kinship Oversight Committee, a coalition of 40 public and private organizations, advocates, and caregivers to address issues facing kinship care families and oversee legislative initiatives.
- Substitute House Bill 1281, Washington's **Kinship Medical Care**, allows kinship caregivers to give informed consent to medical care for children in their care without parental signature. Legislature appropriates \$100,000 per year for two regional kinship navigator projects. Regional Kinship Care Coalitions begin forming in several counties to better collaborate services between providers and caregivers.

1998 1999 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005

Senate Bill 5210 directed Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to place children with relatives, unless issues of safety precludes placement.

- Legislative report and results of state-wide survey published by WA State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP).
- House Bill 1397 authorizes **Kinship Care Work Group** to develop and prioritize recommendations from WSIPP study and develop a report on how to improve service system.

- Legislature appropriated an annual budget of \$500,000 for the creation of **Kinship Caregivers Support Program (KCSP)** for relatives not involved with the child welfare system to provide financial assistance for items like clothing, food, school activities, and transportation.
- The two pilot **Kinship Navigator Projects**, sponsored by Casey Family Programs for 18 months, undergo an extensive project evaluation. A replication and evaluation manual is developed by Tri-West Group.
- Annual **Voices of Children-Annual Kinship Care Children's Contest** is designed for children ages 5-19 to express in drawing or words how living with a relative(s) has made a positive difference in their life.
- The Kinship Care Solutions Project** began as a model kinship legal program through the Seattle/ King County Bar Association screening cases for referrals to volunteer attorneys to represent the kinship caregivers in non-parental custody cases.



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Color key: ■ Legislative ■ Kinship Navigator ■ Research

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- **Annual Kinship Care Regional Conferences held throughout the state.** In Six conferences were held one that focused on Tribal Kinship Care.
- House Bill 3139 **Kinship Caregivers' Consent for Mental Health Care of Minors** clarified kinship caregivers can consent to mental health care of children in their care.
- Legislature doubles funding for the **Kinship Caregivers Support Program** to one million per year.
- [Washington State Kinship Care website went on-line](#)
- Statewide kinship care video conference, **Helping Children-Supporting Kinship Families Through Collaboration**, is held and televised to 12 sites. The conference provides cross training throughout the public and private service system.

Means Testing on Child Only TANF implemented.

AL TSA received an Administration on Community Living Tribal Kinship Respite Grant to complement the Tribal Navigator program.

- **Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5890** (foster care and adoption) provided funding to eliminate means testing for child-only TANF grants.
- **Senate Bills 5490 and 6453** gives DCYF the ability to purchase legal services for parents and kinship caregivers when it supports safety, permanency, or well-being for a child.
- Landmark bipartisan legislation, the **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)** was signed into law as part of a federal budget bill. This law broadened allowable uses for Title IV-E funding which pays for the federal portion of foster care services.
- **DCYF partnered with AL TSA to submit a federal Kinship Navigator Grant Proposal**, made available under FFPSA. DCYF was awarded \$361,000. DCYF and AL TSA will evaluate the current Kinship Navigator program in Washington with the goal of meeting evidenced-based promising practice criteria.

- Legislature provided funding for a Statewide Kinship Care Legal Aid Coordinator.
- **A total of three sites across the state participated in the evaluation research for the Navigator Case management program.**

2006 2007 2011 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Legislature increased funding for the **Kinship Navigator Program** by \$400,000 per year, adding 4 new regions plus supplemental funds to the original two sites.

- Based on **WA State Healthy Youth Survey**, AL TSA and DCYF write, [Risk Factors Associated with Different Living Arrangements: Youth in Kinship Care, Foster Care, Unstable Housing, and Homelessness](#)
- Legislature funded a **Tribal Kinship Navigator initiative** funding eight Tribal A half-time position at AL TSA was supported to guide kinship programs.

Two pilot sites were selected to conduct evaluation research on a newly developed Navigator Case management program.

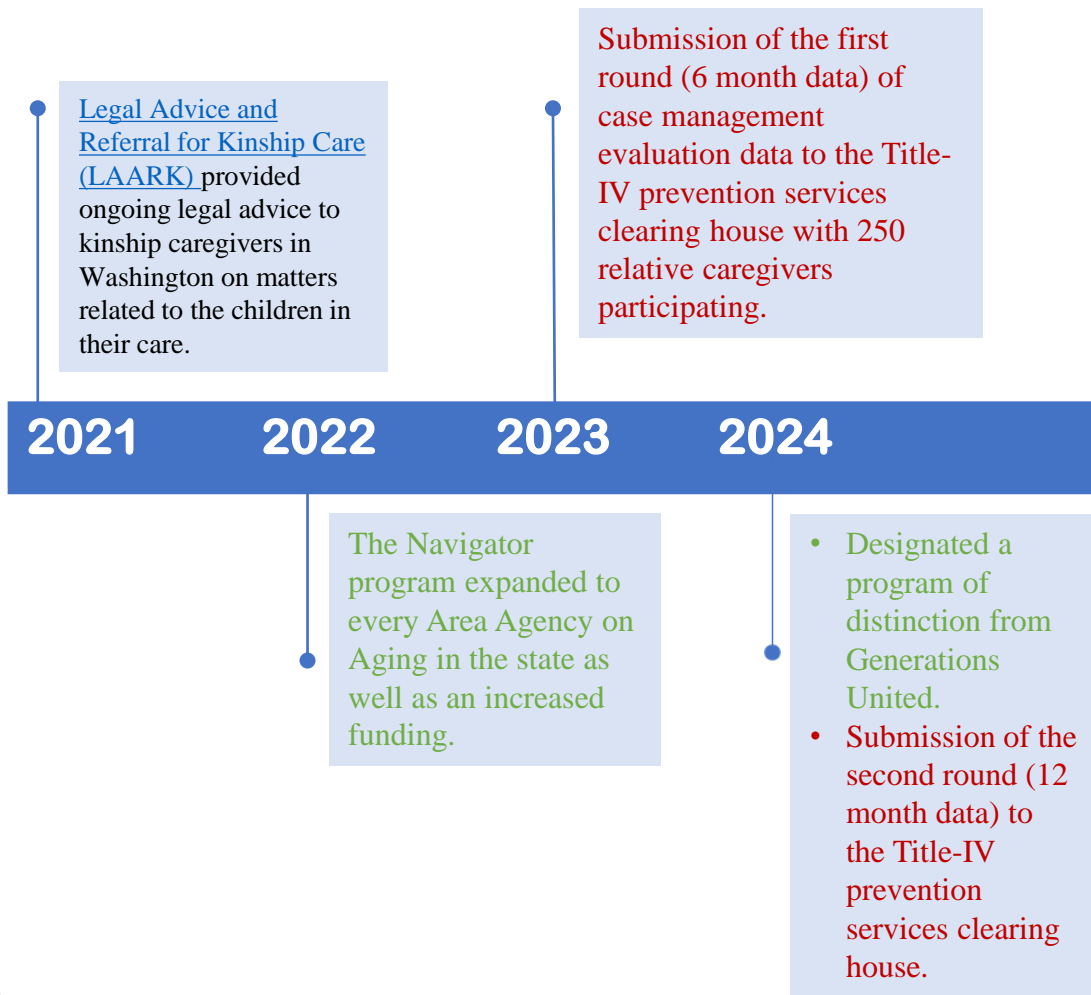


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Print and Media Resources Available

- [*Relatives as Parents: A Resource Guide for Relatives Raising Children* \(fourth edition\)](#). This guide produced by ADSA provides numerous community, state, and federal resources to help relatives who are raising children.
- Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) [Kinship Caregiver Resources](#)
- [Video: Legal Options for Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children in Washington State](#), showcases Rebecca Morrow, former Kinship Legal Fellow with Columbia Legal Services in Seattle explaining the various legal options including third party custody, guardianship, and adoption, distributed by ADSA.
- [Options for Grandparents and Other Nonparental Caregivers: A Legal Guide for Washington State](#), this handbook is for grandparents and other non-parent caregivers regarding legal relationships with the children in their care. Available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)
- [Kinship Reference Guide Handouts](#), statewide resources for caregivers on topics including healthcare, mental health, basic needs, and education.

Other Activities

- *Annual Governor's Proclamation for Relatives Raising Children's Day* since 1995.
- Approximately 50 support groups focused on grandparents and other relatives raising children operate in 21 counties.
- Regional Kinship Care Coalitions have formed in King, Snohomish, Clark, and Yakima counties to better collaborate services between service providers.
- Through the *National Family Caregivers Support Program*, funded by the Older Americans Act, approximately \$260,000 is spent annually to support relatives over the age of 55 raising children through support groups, resource guides, trainings etc.