



## CHECK TO SEE WHO IN YOUR STATE IS APPLYING FOR A FEDERAL FAMILY CONNECTION GRANT

*Applications Due by July 6th*

***July 6<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for applying for federal Family Connection Grants. They can be used to help grandparents and other relatives and other family members get help for children they are raising or are interested in helping to keep out of foster care or get out of foster care. Check now with your local or state child welfare agency, non-profit agencies in your area that have worked with kinship care families, or your tribal government, if applicable, to see if any of them are planning to apply for a Family Connection Grant and what they are proposing to do with the funds. Tell them you are interested in helping them make sure that children being raised by grandparents and other relatives truly benefit from the Family Connection grants. Encourage them to apply.***

### **What are Family Connection Grants?**

Family Connection Grants are competitive grants that will allow applicants to create or enhance programs to connect children in or at risk of entering foster care to family members. State, local, and tribal child welfare agencies and non-profit agencies that have experience serving children in foster or kinship care can apply for the grants. The grants must be used to establish or expand Kinship Navigator, Family Group Decision Making, Intensive Family Finding, or Residential Family Treatment Programs, including comprehensive family-based substance abuse treatment programs. The grants were established as part of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act that became law in October 2008. \$5 million in guaranteed funds are available for these grants and for evaluation and technical assistance.

## What activities can be funded with Family Connection Grants?

Family Connection Grants may be used to fund four different types of activities, all with the purpose of helping children who are in, or at risk of entering, foster care connect or reconnect with family members. An applicant may apply to do one or any combination of the activities below:

- **Kinship Navigator programs** will assist grandparents and other relative caregivers to learn about, find, and use programs and services to meet the needs of the children they are raising and their own needs. They will also promote effective partnerships among public and private agencies to ensure kinship caregiver families are served. These programs can help link relative caregivers, both in and out of foster care, and the children they are raising to a broad range of services and supports.
- **Family Group Decision Making meetings** will assist families to make decisions and develop plans that nurture children, protect them from abuse and neglect, and help to keep them out of foster care or move them out of care. Steps must be taken, where appropriate, to address domestic violence issues in a safe manner and help connect children exposed to domestic violence to appropriate services, including reconnection with the abused parent when appropriate.
- **Intensive Family Finding** efforts use search technology to find biological family members or other important adult connections for children in the child welfare system, and when family members are identified, work to establish or build upon relationships and explore ways to find a permanent family connection for the children. At a minimum, a family-finding program must include the following elements: Information Gathering; Documentation; Search; Identification; Contact; Assessment; Engagement; and Permanent Family Placement/Relationships.
- **Residential Family-Based Substance Abuse Treatment programs** enable parents and their children to live in a safe environment for a period of not less than six months and provide, on-site or by referral, substance abuse treatment services; children's early intervention services; family counseling, medical, and mental health services; nursery and pre-school; and other services that are designed to provide comprehensive treatment that supports the family.

## **What special requirements are there for Kinship Navigator Programs?**

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act requires that Kinship Navigator programs must:

- Be coordinated with other state or local agencies that promote service coordination or provide information and referral services, including the entities that provide 211 or 311 information systems where available, to avoid duplication or fragmentation of services to kinship care families;
- **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;**
- 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;
- Provide outreach to kinship care families, including by establishing, distributing, and updating a kinship care website, or other relevant guides or outreach materials; and
- 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 to promote better services for those families.

**The act also provides that kinship navigator programs applying for the grants may establish and support a kinship care ombudsman with authority to intervene and help kinship caregivers access services. They also may support any other activities designed to assist kinship caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to improve their caregiving.**

## **How do we find out more about the grants?**

The funding Announcement for the federal Family Connection Grants is on the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-ACYF-CF-0078.html>. The announcement was issued on April 22, 2009 and applications must be received by the Administration for Children and Families no later than 4:30 p.m. EDT on July 6<sup>th</sup> in order to be considered, applicants need to consult ACF's announcement to make arrangements to receive the application and to make sure they follow the full list of detailed requirements in applying for the grants. ACF recommends that applicants submit their application before July 6<sup>th</sup> to ensure that if there are any difficulties, they can be corrected before the application period ends.

## **What does it mean to be a demonstration program?**

ACF has established the Family Connection Grants as a demonstration program. The purpose of a demonstration program is to demonstrate how effectively a particular program or service can work in more than one location or setting, to test new theories or ideas, or to assess how a particular group of children can be served or a particular service need can best be met. To ensure that demonstration programs can effectively demonstrate their goals and outcomes, ACF requires that each Family Connection Grant project:

- Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using a rigorous evaluation approach; and
- Produce detailed procedures and materials based on the evaluation that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices, and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

## **Will the applicant have to commit funds to receive a grant?**

Yes. The federal government will pay 75 percent of the grant amount the first and second years of the grant and 50 percent the third year, but the applicant must pay 25 percent of the amount of the grant each of the first two years and 50 percent the third year. The amount increases over time in order to help increase the likelihood that the activities will be continued after the federal grant ends. At least half of the applicant's share must be in cash; no more than 50 percent may be "in-kind" payments.

### **When will the grants be awarded?**

A date for the awards has not been announced. However, it is expected that they will be awarded no later than September 30, 2009, the end of this fiscal year. The Administration for Children and Families notes in the announcement that grantees are required to have their programs fully functional within 90 days of a grant award.

### **What will be the size of the grants?**

A grant can be no more than \$1 million a year, and no less than \$450,000 a year.

### **What will be the length of the grants?**

Generally, an individual grant will be awarded for a three year project period. No more than 30 may be awarded the first year. The initial grant award will be for 12 months with continuation grants dependent on the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

### **What is important in making sure a grant will be competitive with others being submitted?**

The Administration for Children and Families in the Grant Announcement emphasizes that it is essential that applicants read the entire announcement package carefully before preparing an application and include all of the required application forms and attachments. The application must reflect a thorough understanding of and support the purpose and objectives of the Family Connection Grants as they are outlined in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act. Reviewers expect applicants to understand the goals of the legislation and the Children's Bureau's interest in each topic. A "responsive application" is one that addresses and follows all of the evaluation criteria in ways that demonstrate this understanding. Applications that are considered to be "unresponsive" or do not clearly address the evaluation criteria or program requirements generally receive very low scores and are rarely funded.

### **What must applicants do to submit an application?**

There are several steps required for submitting an application. It is useful to be familiar with them in advance so that they do not delay submission of an application. Applications received after 4:30 p.m. EDT on July 6<sup>th</sup> will not be considered. .

1. **Get Registered:** If the applicant has not applied for a federal grant before it will need to register before it can apply. To register, visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Click on *For Applicants* (left hand menu). Then click on the “*Get Registered*” button and follow the prompts. It may take 3-5 days so do not wait until right before deadline to register.
2. **Find the grant online:** Visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Click on *For Applicants* (left hand menu). Click the “*Find Grant Opportunities*” button. Click the “*Basic Search*” button next to “Search by keyword, Funding Opportunity Number (*FON*) or Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (*CFDA*) number.” Enter Funding Opportunity #: HHS-2009-ACF-ACYF-CF-0078. This will pull up information about the Family Connection Grants.
3. **Submit your proposal:** After the applicant has registered, found the grant on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and developed an application it should return to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and click on “*For Applicants*.” Follow the instructions for the application process. Remember, federal grants require strict compliance with detailed instructions. Follow them carefully and be sure to plan adequate time to prepare a thorough, thoughtful application.

## Helpful Resources

### ACF Funding Announcement of Family Connection Grants

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-ACYF-CF-0078.html>

### Grandfamilies.org (Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center)

[www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)

### State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

[www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org)

### Kinship Navigator Pilot Project: Replication Manual, Casey Family Programs, TriWest Group, 2005

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ea/kinship/KinshipNavigatorReplicationManual.pdf>

### *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*

(*FSE*,) National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the California Permanency for Youth Project

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>

### Making “Relative Search” Happen: A guide to finding and involving relatives at every stage of the child welfare process, ChildFocus, 2007

<http://www.childfocuspartners.com/images/RelativeSearchGuide10-15.pdf>

**Family Centered Substance Abuse Treatment for Women with Substance Use Disorders: History, Key elements, and Challenges**

[http://womenandchildren.treatment.org/documents/Family\\_Treatment\\_Paper508V.pdf](http://womenandchildren.treatment.org/documents/Family_Treatment_Paper508V.pdf)

**Cost Benefit Analysis of Family Based Treatment, Rebecca Project for Human Rights**

[http://www.rebeccaproject.org/images/stories/policypapers/cba\\_cft\\_combined\\_final.pdf](http://www.rebeccaproject.org/images/stories/policypapers/cba_cft_combined_final.pdf)

**Child Outcome Data from Family Based Treatment Programs, Rebecca Project for Human Rights**

[http://www.rebeccaproject.org/images/stories/files/outcome\\_data\\_for\\_comprehensive\\_family\\_treatment\\_programs.pdf](http://www.rebeccaproject.org/images/stories/files/outcome_data_for_comprehensive_family_treatment_programs.pdf)

**Link to Public Law 110-351, The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act**

[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ351.110.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ351.110.pdf)

**For Additional Resources on the New Law, see:**

- **American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law**  
<http://www.abanet.org/child/>
- **Center for Law and Social Policy**  
<http://www.clasp.org/publications/fctsaiaact2008resources.htm>
- **Child Welfare League of America**  
<http://www.cwla.org/advocacy/adoptionhr6893resources.htm>
- **Children's Defense Fund**  
[http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=priorities\\_childwelfare#foster](http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=priorities_childwelfare#foster)
- **Generations United**  
<http://www.gu.org/Foste10161796.asp>

*For further information on the Family Connection Grants, please contact Beth Davis-Pratt of the Children's Defense Fund at [edavis-pratt@childrensdefense.org](mailto:edavis-pratt@childrensdefense.org) or 202-662-3629 or Terence Kane of Generations United at [TKane@gu.org](mailto:TKane@gu.org) or 202-777-0114*

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