

Connecting Kinship Caregivers Creative Support Programs for Families

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Kinship Care Defined

Kinship care refers to the care of children and youth by their relatives or another adult with a significant connection to the children.

In Colorado, there are approximately 36,000 children in Kinship care.

Provided by 2014 U. S. Census American Fact Finder

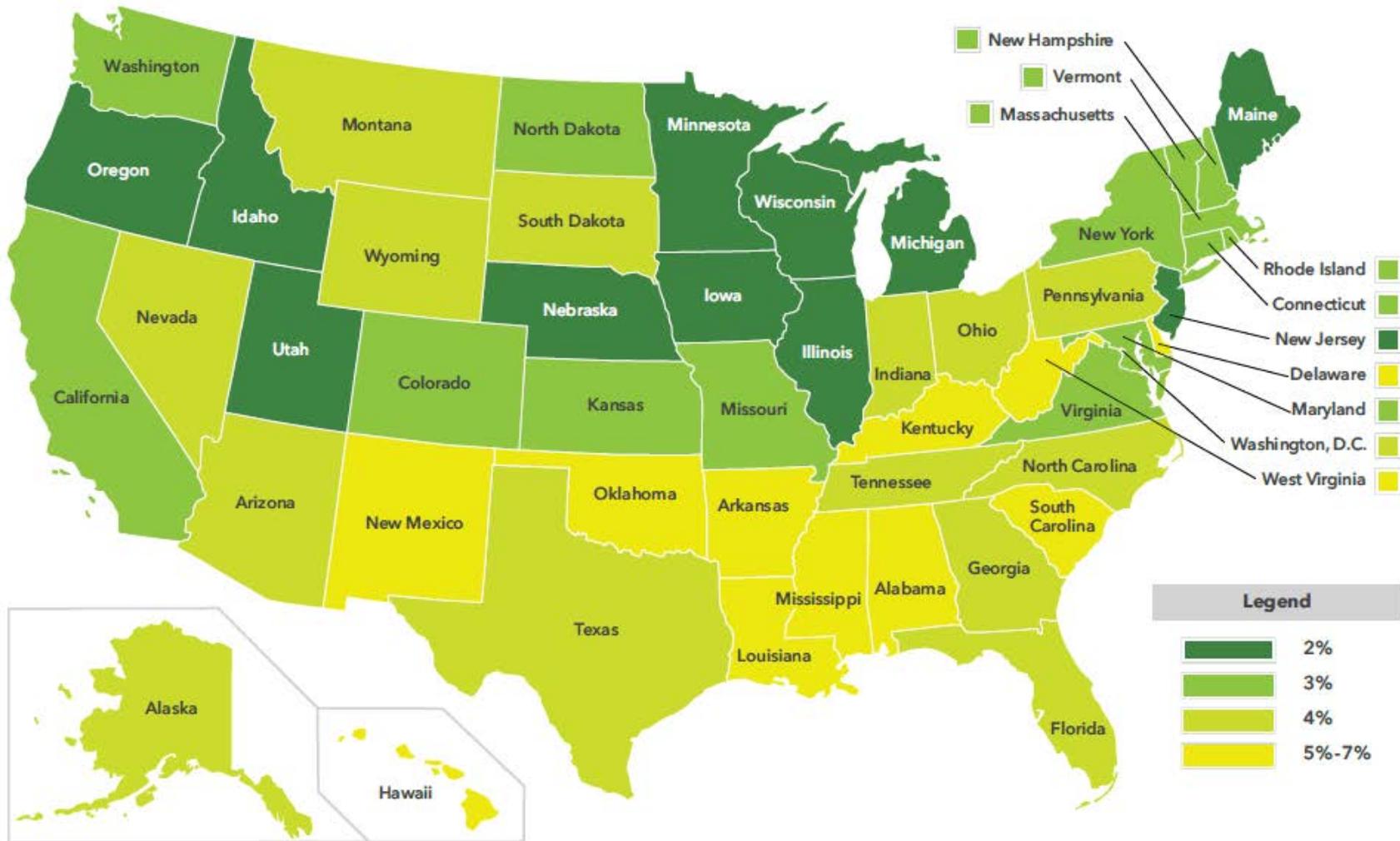
At Catholic Charities we currently serve approximately 187 kinship caregivers and 124 children and youth

- 95% are considered low-income
- 38% Caucasian
- 31% African American
- 18% Hispanic
- 2% Native American

Approximately 86% of our caregivers are grandparents. We also have great grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and psychological kin.



Children Being Raised in Grandfamilies¹⁴ or Kinship Care¹⁵ (2013-2015)



GRANDPARENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR GRANDCHILDREN (2014)

2,631,546 Grandparents are responsible for grandchildren ²⁰



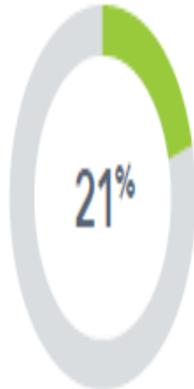
58% of them are in the workforce ²¹



1,527,151



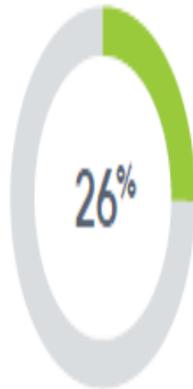
21% of them live below the poverty line ²²



547,722



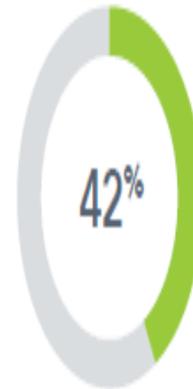
26% of them have a disability ²³



671,119



42% of them have provided care for 5 years or more ²⁴



1,101,127



39% of them are over 60 ²⁵



1,023,862

Grandfamilies/Kinship Care

- Many times Sudden and Without Warning
- Reasons Vary
 - Death
 - Drug addiction
 - Military
 - Incarceration
 - Mental Illness
- Over 2.5 Million Grandparents are Primary Caregivers of Grandchildren



- Like Many Caregivers, Ignore Own Health Care Needs
- Work Past Retirement Age to Support Grandchildren
- Stress, Depression, Hypertension
- Blame Self
- Decreased Energy Level
- Feeling of Social Isolation



Grandparents

Federal Funds

Older Americans Act

- National Family Caregiver Support Program 10%
- Grandparent(s), Step-grandparent(s) or Older Adults(s)
- Relative Caregiver 55 years and Older

Lifespan Respite Grant

- Limited States
- Based on Grant Proposals
- Colorado
 - Coming Up For Air



Coming Up for Air

- Weekend of Education, Networking, and Fun
- 16 Families; 23 Adults and 25 Children
- Separate Schedules for Adults and Children and if Wanted, Separate Sleeping Rooms
- Topics
 - Knowledge is Power
 - Financial Planning for Families
 - You Hold the Key – Creating Balance
 - Scavenger Hunt; Robot Costume Making; Robot Snow Globes, Rockets & Kites; Fishing

Coming Up for Air Results

- Most Families Did Not Know Resources Available
- 14 of 16 Families Never Accessed Respite
- All Families Felt More Aware of Community Support and Resources
- Majority Felt Better Equipped with Tools, Skills, and Resources to Handle Stressful Situations

Coming Up for Air Testimonials

- “Unbelievable feeling of love and wanting to help our kids and others.”
- “The respite, the kids having fun, the information on resources (huge!!), the camaraderie, the other families we met, knowing we are not so alone...”
- “They created such a welcoming family environment without judgment!”

Respite Vouchers

- Families or Case Managers Submit Application
- Families Choose an Approved Agency
- Average Voucher is \$500 and Must be Used Within 90-120 Days of Award
- Emergency or Planned Respite Available
- Available for Families Not Currently Receiving Financial Assistance for Respite
- Not Income Based



Services offered to Kinship caregivers

- Support & education through 8 monthly groups
- Multiple trainings for caregivers throughout the year
- Individual counseling services
- Resources & referrals
- Family-focused events
- Outreach & community connections



Connections to the Community

Relatives Raising Children Conference

- 2016 will be the 17th annual conference
- Collaboration of five agencies (county department of human services, local city government & non profit agencies)
- Workshops, resource tables and day of networking
- Average attendance 75 caregivers from across the state



Colorado Kinship Alliance

Quarterly meeting with average of 20 in attendance

- Network of county & state department of human services, local city governments, non profit agencies, mental health service providers and Kinship caregivers
- Provide updates on caseloads, legislation at state & national levels, discussion of best practices, Title IV E Waiver program utilization, needs of families, networking and collaboration to support families



My Lovely Home

Let me tell you about my home using my five senses. First I see bikes and toys. Next I feel my cat and my soft pillow. I hear talking and TV and I taste apple and pumpkin pie. I smell wet dog and cookies baking. Finally I love my home with all of my senses.

Timmy, Age 9

Title IV E Waiver

-Implemented by our Governor John Hickenlooper in February 2012 to end in September 2017 (5 years)

-The goal is to improve experiences of children coming into the state child welfare system. Three federal goals that were brought to a state level:

- 1) increase permanency for children
- 2) increase positive outcomes for children and families
- 3) prevent child abuse neglect and reentry into out of home care

-5 waiver interventions-

- 1) family engagement
- 2) trauma informed child assessments
- 3) trauma focused behavioral health treatment
- 4) permanency round tables
- 5) kinship supports

Title IV E Waiver

-Where does the Kinship population come into play with Title IV E?

- Increase supports and more staff to work with Kinship families. Target populations- re entry into care and to move children into lower levels of care.
- Trauma informed care (address trauma related behavioral and social needs of children).
- Service interventions (establish support groups, develop referral networks, additional support for non certified kin).

-Legislation connected to Kinship that helped support the waiver- 1) SB 12-066 guardianship assistance expanded to include psychological kin 2) HB 12-1047 non safety standards for kin homes- ability to waive certain licensing standards for kinship foster homes

http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/co_waiver_proposal.pdf

Incorporating Kinship Caregivers into Programs and Services

- Respect the history and unique situation of the caregivers and children.
- Biological parents may still be involved, regardless of why the children are not in their care.
- Do not judge the connection to biological parents and the struggle Kinship caregivers and children face with this relationship.
- Language- change your printed and online materials to include terms such as caregiver, grandparent, etc. Also be aware of this while in conversation with Kinship families.
- Take into consideration that several of these caregivers may be aging seniors. Mobility, health, transportation, financial means and generational differences all play a role.
- Kinship caregivers generally do not expect to be raising children at this stage in their life. They may also have not realized it would be a permanent or long term situation.