



**Resource Letter:
For Judges and Attorneys Handling Child Protective Services Cases**

August 1, 2018

The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program

Effective September 1, 2017, the Department of Family and Protective Services enhanced its Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program (RODC), which previously provided eligible kinship caregivers with a small amount of funds to help care for children placed in their care by DFPS. House Bill 4, passed by the 85th Texas Legislature, replaced the integration and annual reimbursement payments with a program that offers kinship families a monthly stipend, similar to foster care payments. The program also allows for a 3-year Post-Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) Annual Reimbursement for kinship caregivers who obtain permanent custody of a child.

Q: Who qualifies for the new Kinship Reimbursement Payment?

A: Caregivers are eligible for the Kinship Reimbursement Payment if:

- the child they are caring for is currently in CPS conservatorship;
- they have an approved home assessment and have begun Kinship Caregiver Training;
- they are NOT already verified as foster parents;
- they sign and abide by a Kinship Caregiver Agreement; and
- their total household income does not exceed 300% of the current federal poverty limit.

Q: How much is the Kinship Reimbursement Payment?

A: The Kinship Reimbursement Payment is currently set at \$11.55 per day, per child; this is approximately \$345.00 per month, per child.

Q: How long may an eligible caregiver receive the Kinship Payment?

A: The monthly reimbursement payments are available for up to 12 months after placement of the child in the RODC with a one-time, six-month extension for good cause.

Q: Under what “good cause” circumstances might payments go beyond 12 months?

A: Examples include:

- finding a previously absent parent of the child;
- awaiting the expiration of the timeline for an appeal of an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship;
- allowing additional time for a kin caregiver to complete the approval process for verification or adoption of the child;
- waiting for approval of a child's placement from another state;
- a delayed determination of the child's Indian Child status, or awaiting the approval of the Indian Child's Tribe; or
- any other circumstance involving the child or caregiver that DFPS deems as justification for an extension.

Q: What if the child moves?

A: The payments follow the child, but the duration of the payment stays the same. For example, if a child lives with an eligible grandmother for 4 months and then moves to an eligible aunt's home for 8 months, the 12-month payment period does not restart.

Q: How is the Kinship Reimbursement Payment dispersed?

A: The Kinship Reimbursement Payment is paid monthly similar to foster care payments, but because it is a reimbursement, it is paid in arrears. In other words, the payments are determined by the number of days the child was with the kinship caregiver the previous month. Payments are processed for care days in the prior month on or about the 15th of each month, and disbursed at the end of that month for care days in the prior month.

Q: Should relatives still apply for TANF before receiving the kin payment?

A: Grandparents are no longer required to apply for and be denied the TANF Grandparent Grant (a one-time payment of \$1,000 per sibling group) before qualifying for the Kinship Reimbursement Payment. However, a grandparent may still apply for the grandparent grant and receive it in addition to the Kinship Reimbursement Payment.

Q: What if a caregiver receives PMC of child?

A: If a caregiver receives PMC of a child, the caregiver can request the \$500 annual reimbursement per child for child-related costs. DFPS can reimburse caregivers in this amount for up to three years or until the child turns 18, whichever comes first.

Q: What can judges and attorneys do to support the kinship payment process?

A: Judges and attorneys should:

- be familiar with the eligibility criteria;
- know that DFPS can only make the payment based on a reimbursement process; and
- understand that if courts make tailored orders regarding different dates of payments, this may delay the payment process for other kinship caregivers in that region. Every region is processing a large number of kinship caregiver payments every month, and because kinship reimbursements are currently processed manually, a court-ordered payment requires extra steps in validation which may cause delays in the overall delivery of payments in the corresponding region.

Q: How can I learn more about kinship placements in general?

A: The Capacity Building Center for States supports jurisdictions across the nation in implementing and sustaining practices that promote and maintain relationships of children in care with their parents and siblings, place children with relatives whenever appropriate, and normalize their experiences in foster care as much as possible.

Publications and Videos:

- [Authentic Voices Video Series: Sharing Our Perspective](#)
- [Empowering Caregivers, Strengthening Families Video Series](#)
- [Having the Normalcy Conversation Series](#) (publication series)
- [It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Care Discussion Guides and Video Series](#)
- [Perspectives on Normalcy: Videos and Discussion Questions](#)

Related Resources:

- [Kinship Care](#) (Child Welfare Information Gateway)
- [Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained \(KEEP\)](#) (Oregon Social Learning Center)
- [Grandfamilies](#) (Generations United)
- [Kinship Care Resource Kit for Community and Faith-Based Organizations](#) (Children's Defense Fund)
- [The Kinship Treatment Foster Care Initiative Toolkit](#) (Foster Family-based Treatment Association)
- ["Supporting Relative Caregivers of Children"](#) (National Conference of State Legislatures)

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