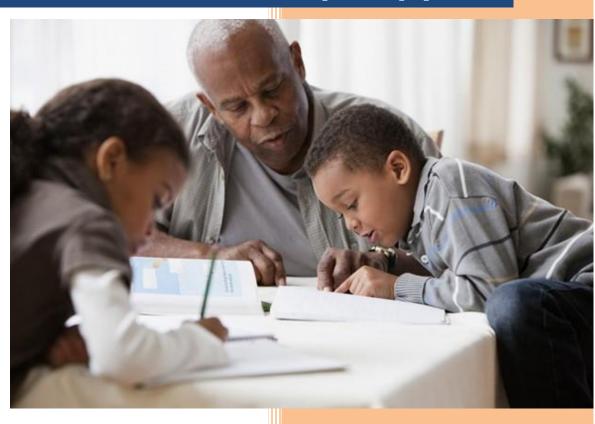**February 2022**

# Grandfamilies/Kinship Support

**Request for Inquiries**

## Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in programs that support caregivers in their role as their child's first teacher. The Grandfamilies/Kinship Support effort will help organizations enhance and expand their services to grandfamilies/kinship care families. In this document, the terms "grandfamilies" and "kinship care" may be used interchangeably to refer to families in which grandparents, other adult family members, or close family friends raise children whose parents are not in the home. These families can be either inside or outside the child welfare system.

In 2020, Generations United, with support from WPF, conducted the *Grandfamilies of Philadelphia*[i] study to help service providers, educators, policymakers, funders, and other community members to understand better the composition of grandfamilies in Philadelphia, the availability of services for them, and the degree to which they are aware of and able to access helpful services. This Request for Inquiries (RFI) is an outgrowth of this recent study. It has informed WPF's efforts to increase the ability of Philadelphia-based agencies to help grandfamilies support their children's learning and development.

## Background

There are many reasons why young children may be raised by grandparents or family members other than their parents. Grandfamilies often result from biological parents' challenges that include divorce, drug use, incarceration, job loss, and illness.[ii] The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the needs of existing grandfamilies and created new ones. According to the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, more than half (57%) of the children in foster care were in grandfamilies/kinship foster care (2,457 youth).[iii] In the state of Pennsylvania, for every one child raised by kin in foster care, there are ten being raised by kin outside of foster care. [iv]

For many grandparents who were not planning on raising young children, this new role can prove difficult. Many grandfamily caregivers are retired, and some live on a fixed income with little room in their budget to provide for the needs of a child. Challenges can include financial and legal difficulties, the children's physical, mental and behavioral health, and issues related to the caregiver's own health needs. Grandfamilies may also struggle to access information about services and supports available to them.[v]

The recent *Grandfamilies of Philadelphia* report noted a number of challenges facing these families:

- Many low-income grandfamilies have insufficient financial resources to address basic needs.
- Caregivers often have difficulty navigating agency and government services due to uncoordinated services.
- Children in grandfamilies often have behavioral health needs that have gone unaddressed.
- Caregivers' physical and mental health can be impacted by their new parenting role.
- Navigating the school curriculum and virtual education presents financial and digital challenges.
- Agencies may be unresponsive and insensitive to the unique needs of grandfamilies.
- Informal supports (e.g., family, friends, church) are essential and need to be cultivated.
- There are insufficient opportunities for caregivers to overcome isolation, and support groups provide a lifeline.
- The legal hurdles that caregivers face to achieve child and family stability can also be obstacles to services.

However, research shows that when grandfamilies receive the supports they need, children raised by grandparents or other relatives thrive despite the multiple challenges. Compared to children in foster care with non-relatives, children living with relatives have more stability, better behavioral and mental health outcomes, are more likely to stay connected to siblings, family connections, and cultural identity.[vi]

# Grandfamilies/Kinship Support Letters of Inquiry

## *Overview*

WPF requests Letters of Inquiry for three-year projects to enhance organizations' ability to serve grandfamilies in Philadelphia.

Upon reviewing Letters of Inquiry, WPF will invite a limited number of organizations to complete full proposals.

WPF seeks to fund 5-8 organizations that will focus on grandfamily/kinship care programming and strategies that improve services, access to resources, and outcomes for grandfamilies.

## *Objectives*

The objectives of the three-year Grandfamillies/Kinship Support (August 2022 to July 2025) effort are to:

**Increase** the number of grandfamilies being effectively served in linguistically and culturally responsive services

**Implement** high-quality programs and services that support children's development, early literacy/language development, academic achievement, and connection to needed resources that improve family stability.

**Increase** the use of best practices and strategies that can enhance outreach and support to targeted families.

**Enhance** the agency's infrastructure to serve these families.

**Strengthen** the network of kinship service professionals, grassroots community partners, and educators to foster peer learning and collaboration among providers.

**Build** the capacity of organizations to evaluate their impact.

## *Review Criteria*

Letters of Inquiry should be informed by research, best practices, and agency evaluation results. All Letters of Inquiry will be judged on the following criteria:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Community Need** | Demonstrates a clear understanding of the needs of participating grandfamilies and the communities in which they live. |
| **Agency Performance and Capacity** | Clearly describes agency's experience supporting grandfamilies, including past successes and challenges. Capacity and performance data (staffing, participants served, range of services, outcomes, etc.) should be stated. |
| **Participant Involvement** | Describes how kinship families have been previously engaged to inform your agency's services (i.e., focus groups, surveys, interviews) and how the agency plans to continue soliciting their input to inform and evaluate agency services. |
| **Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness** | Discusses how efforts will be culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate, including providing interpreters and translation, if needed. |
| **Services and Participant Resources** | Describes your agency's history in providing grandfamilies services that address their access to and use of needed resources (e.g., childcare, healthcare, education, transportation, legal, food, support groups, social service referrals). |
| **Organizational Resources and Capacity** | Has a preliminary implementation plan that includes existing and new staff, professional development, technology, data management, and other agency resources to deliver the proposed services. |
| **Partnership** | Identifies the agency's current and proposed collaborative partners (formal and informal) and how they plan to connect to Pennsylvania's Kinship Navigator Program. |
| **Budget** | The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities and the number of grandfamilies to be served. |
| **Sustainability** | Outlines plan to sustain proposed activities beyond the three-year grant period. |

## Eligibility

Agencies must be certified nonprofit entities or operate under a nonprofit fiduciary. Eligible organizations include:

- **Community-based organizations:** social service organizations, neighborhood associations, religious institutions, childcare centers, medical providers, community development organizations, recreation centers, and others that serve grandfamilies and are firmly rooted in their communities.

- **Public institutions:** libraries, government entities, K-12 schools, and colleges/universities serving grandfamilies.

Proposed programming must occur in Philadelphia.

*Please note the Foundation will not provide support for political lobbying or legislative activities, individual scholarships, or health research or health education programs.*

## Evaluation/Learning Community

Funded agencies will be required to participate in a Learning Community with other kinship providers and a formative evaluation. More details will be provided to those organizations invited to submit a full proposal.

## Budget

Project budgets should cover three years of funding and may include up to three months for planning and professional development. Organizations are encouraged to build on their existing programs, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts.

Preliminary project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the Inquiry Form narrative.

Total funding from WPF may not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget. In addition, the most competitive inquiries will have total grant requests under $500,000.

All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, and implementation, are eligible for funding.

**External evaluation costs** should not be included, as WPF will cover this separately.

## Timeline

**February 14, 2022**
The inquiry submission period opens

**February 22, 2022**
Informational Webinar
(see below)

**March 7, 2022**
**Inquiry forms are due by
5:00 PM EST**

**March 22, 2022**
Select applicants invited to submit proposals.

**April 22, 2022**
Proposals from invited applicants are due by 5:00PM EST

**July 22, 2022**
WPF Board review of selected proposals

**August 2022 – July 2025**
Program implementation and evaluation

## Process

The application process begins by completing an [Inquiry Form](#) (click to download) and submitting it via email to RFI@williampennfoundation.org by **March 7, 2022**. A team will review all Inquiry Forms and invite selected applicants to submit a full proposal.

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Stavrakos at [jstavrakos@williampennfoundation.org](mailto:jstavrakos@williampennfoundation.org).

### Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an informational webinar on **Tuesday, February 22, 2022** at **3:00PM EST.**

Please use [this link](#) to register for the webinar.

# Citations

1. Rogers, A., Hayslip, B. (2021) *Grandfamilies of Philadelphia: Strengths, Needs, and Supports* *https://williampennfoundation.org/sites/default/files/reports/GU-GrandfamiliesofPhiladelphia-FINAL.pdf*

2. Kaminski, P. L., B. Hayslip, Jr., J. L. Wilson, and L. N. Casto. (2008). "Parenting attitudes and adjustment among custodial grandparents." *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* 6: 263-284.

3. Department of Human Services, City of Philadelphia. "Quarterly Indicators Report: Fiscal Year 2021 Quarter 1." March 2021. https://www.phila.gov/media/20210329163818/Quarterly-Indicators-Report-FY21-Q1.pdf

4. https://grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Pennsylvania%20GrandFacts%20State%20Fact%20Sheet%202021%20Update.pdf

5. Generations United. "Grandfamilies: strengths and challenges." 2019. https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/Documents/Grandfamilies-GeneralFactSheet%20%287%29.pdf.

6. Generations United. "Children thrive in grandfamilies." 2016. https://www.gu.org/resources/children-thrive-in-grandfamilies/.

# Resources

***African American Grandfamilies: Helping Children Thrive Through Connection to Culture and Family***
This toolkit is designed to give resources and tips to child welfare agencies, other government agencies and nonprofit organizations, so they can better serve all African American grandfamilies. **Learn more**

***Fact Sheet: Intergenerational Programs Benefit Everyone*** serves as a companion piece to Making the Case and provides a synthesized overview of the benefits. **Learn more**.

***Grandfamilies of Philadelphia: Strengths, Needs, and Supports*** is a recent report on the status of grandfamilies in Philadelphia. The full report can be read here.

***Latino Grandfamilies: Helping Latino Children Thrive Through Connection to Culture and Family***
This new toolkit is designed to give resources and tips to child welfare agencies, other government agencies, and nonprofit organizations so that they can better serve all Latino grandfamilies regardless of child welfare involvement. **Learn more**.

***Making the Case for Intergenerational Programs*** provides rationale and facts to help make the case for intergenerational programs. It is based on a comprehensive review of the literature on intergenerational programs and highlights evidence-based findings on how intergenerational programs benefit everyone. **Learn more**.

***Resource Parent Handbook: A Guide for Foster & Kinship Caregivers.*** Department of Human Services. December 2020. https://www.phila.gov/media/20201222134221/DHS_resource_parent_handbook_122220.pdf

***PA Kin Connector:*** *https://www.kinconnector.org/*

***GrandFamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy*** The National Research Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren launched this online, peer review journal dedicated to topics related to grandparents raising grandchildren. http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/grandfamilies/

***Reinforcing a Strong Foundation: Equitable Supports for Basic Needs of Grandfamilies***
The 2021 State of Grandfamilies in America Annual Report includes updated national and state data on grandfamilies and key recommendations to address inequities and provide critical supports to serve grandfamilies well. **Learn more**.

***Staying Connected While Staying Apart: Intergenerational Programs & the COVID-19 Pandemic*** shares what we have learned about intergenerational engagement during the pandemic, including examples of inspiring intergenerational initiatives; tips for addressing the digital divide; and resources to help you get started or strengthen your intergenerational work. **Learn more**.

***USAging:*** Check out their website's new look and updated site navigation and learn about the organization's work and programs. **Learn more.**