

STATE OF NEW YORK

531

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. HEVESI -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to establishing a statewide kinship navigator program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The title heading of title 10 of article 6 of the social
2 services law, as added by section 4 of part F of chapter 58 of the laws
3 of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

4 KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE AND STATEWIDE
5 KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

6 § 2. The social services law is amended by adding a new section 458-g
7 to read as follows:

8 § 458-g. Statewide kinship navigator program. 1. The statewide kinship
9 navigator program (hereinafter the "program"), is hereby established
10 within the office of children and family services.

11 2. Such program shall assist kinship caregivers who are seeking infor-
12 mation or assistance related to services and benefits that may be avail-
13 able to the caregiver or child. Within appropriations available, such
14 information and assistance shall include but not be limited to:

15 (a) referral services;

16 (b) access to a free legal consultation for kinship caregivers in need
17 of legal assistance or assistance understanding their legal rights;

18 (c) assistance applying for publicly funded benefits including but
19 not limited to public assistance, Medicaid, child health plus, child
20 care subsidies, and the supplemental nutrition assistance program
21 (SNAP); and

22 (d) information related to services available pursuant to section
23 three hundred ninety-two of this chapter.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 3. For purposes of this section, "kinship caregiver" shall have the
2 same meaning as defined by subdivision twenty-two of section three
3 hundred seventy-one of this chapter, who is currently caring for a child
4 or is a prospective kinship caregiver. It shall also include relative
5 guardians and prospective relative guardians, as defined in section four
6 hundred fifty-eight-a of this title.

7 4. (a) The commissioner shall administer the statewide kinship naviga-
8 tor program, either directly or through contract. In addition to provid-
9 ing information and assistance, as required by subdivision two of this
10 section, the program shall also have the following responsibilities,
11 within appropriations available, which shall include but not be limited
12 to:

13 (i) statewide coordination of services, including coordination of
14 efforts among the office of children and family services, the department
15 of health, the office for the aging, the education department, the
16 office of temporary and disability assistance, the office of addiction
17 services and supports, the office of mental health, the office for
18 people with developmental disabilities, local social services districts
19 and relevant community-based organizations;

20 (ii) the provision of information as to the availability of, eligibil-
21 ity criteria for, and application procedure for available benefits and
22 services;

23 (iii) compilation of statistical data from state and local agencies
24 and dissemination to the public;

25 (iv) operation of a toll-free telephone number that may be called
26 to obtain basic information about the rights of, and services available
27 to kinship caregivers;

28 (v) operation of local respite services;

29 (vi) training related to caring for children; and

30 (vii) the consolidation of existing programs with existing contractors
31 that are satisfactorily performing as determined by the office of chil-
32 dren and family services and the expansion of service provision to
33 comply with federally approved standards; such consolidation plan shall
34 provide for submission of information regarding outcome-based measures
35 that demonstrate quality of services provided and program effectiveness
36 to the office of children and family services in a form and manner
37 and at such times as required by such office.

38 (b) The commissioner shall divide the state into not less than seven
39 and not greater than twelve regions in order for the kinship care navi-
40 gator program to develop regional expertise in carrying out the
41 provisions of this section.

42 5. The commissioner shall make grants, within amounts appropriated
43 therefor, to a community-based organization or consortia of community-
44 based organizations to operate the statewide kinship navigator program.

45 6. The commissioner shall promulgate any rules and regulations neces-
46 sary for the implementation of this section.

47 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.