



**DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY**  
**ANNUAL SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES REPORT**

**State Fiscal Year 2023 (Updated March 6, 2024)**

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Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 8-526\(E\)](#), the Department of Child Safety (DCS) is required to provide information on kinship caregivers, housing assistance program, and the education training voucher and independent living program. The supportive programs outlined in this report are critical to helping the Department achieve its mission to successfully partner with families, caregivers, and the community to strengthen families, ensure safety, and achieve permanency for all Arizona’s children through prevention, services, and support. These programs support youth and kinship caregivers, and assist youth to prepare for adulthood.

[A.R.S. § 8-526\(E\)](#) states that DCS shall make available the following information on an annual basis:

1. *The percentage of substantiations upheld by the office of administrative hearings (found in the [Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report](#)).*
2. The demographics and number of children placed with relative caregivers.
3. The demographics of kinship foster caregivers.
4. The number of relative children per kinship foster care family.
5. The department's success at maintaining kinship foster care placements.
6. The type and cost of services provided to kinship foster care families by licensed and unlicensed caregivers.
7. The cost of services provided to kinship foster caregivers compared to the cost of out-of-home placements.
8. The number of children and families, by district, receiving services through the housing assistance program during the previous fiscal year.
9. The total amount of money spent on the housing assistance program by region.
10. A programmatic and fiscal evaluation of the effectiveness of the housing assistance program that includes the amount of foster care expenditures avoided.
11. The number of children in the independent living program by age, county and education status.

**This report is divided into three sections:**

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[Independent Living](#).....12  
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**KINSHIP FOSTER CARE**

**Overview**

Pursuant to [Arizona Revised Statute § 8-526](#), the Department of Child Safety (DCS) is required to make available on an annual basis, information on the Kinship Foster Care Program including:

- The demographics and number of children placed with relative caregivers.
- The demographics of kinship foster caregivers.
- The number of relative children per kinship foster care family.
- The department's success at maintaining kinship foster care placements.
- The type and cost of services provided to kinship foster care families by licensed and unlicensed caregivers.
- The cost of services provided to kinship foster caregivers compared to the cost of out-of-home placements.

This report is submitted in satisfaction of this requirement.

For generations, extended families have played significant roles in the rearing of children when parents otherwise cannot. Kinship caregivers provide love and nurturance in a familiar setting, allowing children to remain connected with their families. These children live with people they know and trust, thereby reinforcing the child's sense of cultural identity and well-being. Children living with kinship caregivers make and sustain extended family connections, promoting the continuation of lifelong family traditions and memories. The extended family provides opportunities that support the child in building healthy relationships within the family, ensures the child's safety and well-being, and creates a sense of stability in the child's life.

Arizona continues to utilize kinship foster care at a much greater rate than the national average of 35 percent<sup>1</sup>. As of June 30, 2023, the percentage of children and youth placed with a relative (licensed and unlicensed) was 58 percent.

**Arizona Kinship Foster Care Program Description**

Arizona's Kinship Foster Care Program prioritizes relatives as the first caregiver preference for children in the custody of DCS who require out-of-home care. Kinship care is the preferred living arrangement because they maintain and promote lifelong family connections. Compared to other living arrangements, kinship care is generally a less costly option for a child in the custody of the state.

Kinship Caregivers include adults related by blood and adults with whom the child has a significant relationship. Arizona's foster care population (ages 0-20) has decreased from over 19,000 in 2016 to less than 11,000 in June 2023. The number of children less than eighteen years of age in out-of-home (OOH) care on June 30, 2023 was 10,021 compared to 11,645 on June 30, 2022, which represents a fourteen percent decrease. The number of licensed foster homes in June 2023 was

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<sup>1</sup> [The AFCARS Report, No. 29](#), June 28, 2022

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2,537 compared to 2,864 in June 2022, which represents a 11.4 percent decrease. It is also important to note that the Department continued its work to maximize available bed space and reduce costs by reviewing foster homes who become licensed but have chosen not to utilize their home to provide foster care. When appropriate, these licenses were allowed to expire.

***Licensed Kinship Care*** is when a child is placed with a relative/kin who becomes licensed as a foster care provider. As of June 30, 2023, there were 444 kinship caregivers licensed as foster parents compared to 521 licensed kinship caregivers reported at the end of the previous annual report (SFY 2022). The current 444 licensed kinship caregivers provide out-of-home care for 268 children in foster care. Over the course of SFY 2023, DCS licensed a total of 794 kinship caregivers.

***Unlicensed Kinship Care*** is when a child is placed with a relative/kin with court approval and the caregiver is not licensed as a foster care provider. As of June 30, 2023, there were 2,956 unlicensed kinship caregivers providing homes to children in foster care. This is a 17 percent decrease from the 3,574 unlicensed kinship caregivers reported in the SFY 2022 annual report. The current 2,956 unlicensed kinship caregivers provide out-of-home care to 4,090 children in foster care.

**Services Available to Licensed and Unlicensed Kinship Caregivers**

There are many services available to kinship foster caregivers and the children for whom they provide care. These services include the following:

- *Case management services* - Regular contact and communication with the kinship caregiver occurs to assess and identify needs of the child and family and to assist in developing solutions.
- *Health care coverage* – A medical and dental plan is provided to children through the Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP), which is an AHCCCS (Title XIX Medicaid) health plan.
- *Mental health and other supportive intervention services* – Counseling and other services may be provided through referrals to agencies for kinship foster caregivers and children needing intervention.
- *Transportation services* - Transportation for children to and from medical appointments and other necessary services is available.
- *Child care subsidy* - Child care can be provided for children with local state-approved entities; payment for services is subsidized if these services are deemed necessary.
- *Respite care* - Six days or up to 144 hours annually of respite care is available for kinship foster caregivers.
- *Referrals to other state programs* - Programs such as the Family Assistance Administration, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service, and community resources for children and kinship foster caregivers are available through the Department of Economic Security (DES) and community agencies.
- *Arizona Families Thrive E-newsletter* – This monthly e-newsletter replaced the Arizona Statewide newsletter and provides information about educational opportunities, services and other information that support kinship foster caregivers. Caregivers sign-up to receive the newsletter by enrolling directly on the DCS website or calling the Warm-line.

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- *Kinship Information Sessions (KIS)* – Meetings are provided in Phoenix and Tucson to kinship foster caregivers, to inform them about the court system, resources, policies and foster care licensing.
- *Direct (1:1) assistance* – Support is provided to kinship caregivers through Central Office and region-based staff to provide information, answer questions, provide guidance and general support, and to resolve payment and other issues. Caregivers who participate in the AZ Families Thrive conferences also receive education/training and the opportunity to meet with licensing agencies during this event.

**Costs of Care Provided by the Department of Child Safety (DCS)**

Financial assistance provided to kinship foster caregivers for the children in their care include foster care maintenance payments (for licensed kinship foster caregivers), personal and clothing allowances (for both licensed and unlicensed relative caregivers), diaper allowances (for unlicensed kinship caregivers caring for children under the age of three), and the Kinship Stipend (for unlicensed kinship caregivers).

As shown in Table 1 below, the diaper allowance is \$62.50 per month/per eligible child and the Kinship Stipend is \$300.00 per month/ per child for unlicensed kinship caregivers. Foster care maintenance, clothing and personal allowance rates also increased in SFY23. The below table reflects those rates and are based on average monthly allowance rates and the average length of stay in SFY23. This is done because there are special rates for licensed caregivers as well as the introduction of High Needs Foster Care (HNFC). The HNFC rates are provided to therapeutic foster caregivers for children or youth who no longer meet medical necessity for therapeutic foster care covered by Title XIX funding but still require a higher degree of care. The kinship stipend increased from \$75 per month to \$300 per month effective July 1, 2022. The amount allotted for personal allowances is \$40.45 per month for unlicensed kinship caregivers. The allotted amount for clothing allowances is \$43.80 per month. The total amount allotted is \$384.25 per child for kinship caregivers (\$446.75 per child if diapers are provided). This compares to an average monthly cost of family foster care (licensed kinship and licensed non-kinship) of \$824.44 per child. The average monthly cost of foster care for a child placed in a congregate care setting, such as a group home, is \$4,305.91 per child. These average monthly costs do not include expenditures related to DCS case management, childcare, or other services provided to support the care of children in out-of-home care.

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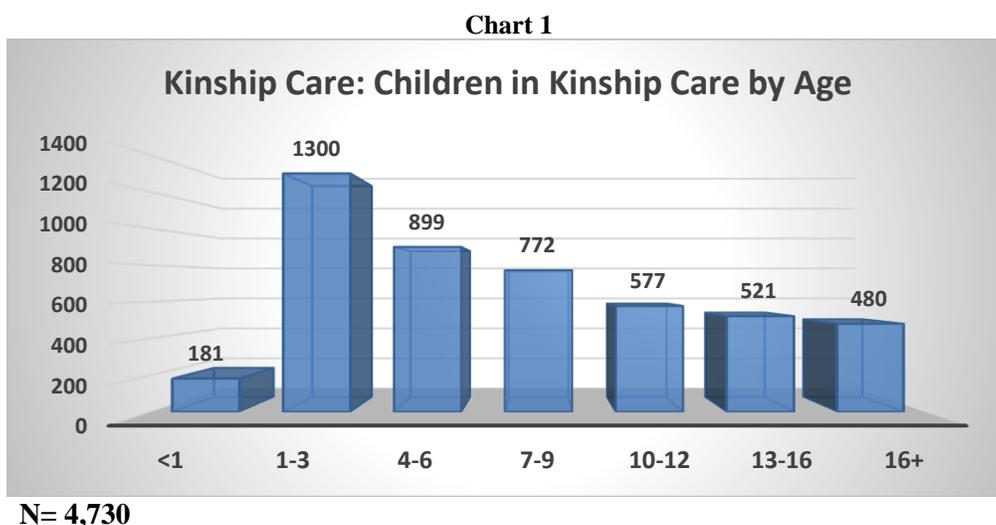
**Table 1 (Monthly Allotted Rates per Child)**

Service	Unlicensed Kinship	Licensed Kinship	Licensed Non-Kinship
Foster Care Maintenance Payments (0-11 year old)	\$300.00 (Kinship Stipend)	\$674.34	\$674.34
Foster Care Maintenance Payments (12-18+ year old)	\$300.00 (Kinship Stipend)	\$674.34	\$674.34
Personal Allowance	\$40.45	\$36.50	\$36.50
Clothing Allowance	\$43.80	\$51.10	\$51.10
Foster Care/Stipend, Personal and Clothing Allowances combined	\$384.25	\$761.94	\$761.94
Diaper Allowance	\$62.50	\$62.50	\$62.50
Foster Care/Stipend, Diaper, Personal and Clothing Allowances combined <sup>2</sup>	\$446.75	\$824.44	\$824.44

**Demographic Data about Children in Kinship Care**

As of June 30, 2023, there were 4,730 children in licensed and unlicensed kinship care, which was 47 percent of the total out-of-home care population of 10,021 children ages zero to seventeen. The average age for children in kinship care was 7.34 years. The largest percentage of children in kinship care, 27.5 percent (1,300), are between ages one and three.

Chart 1 displays the number of children in kinship care by age:

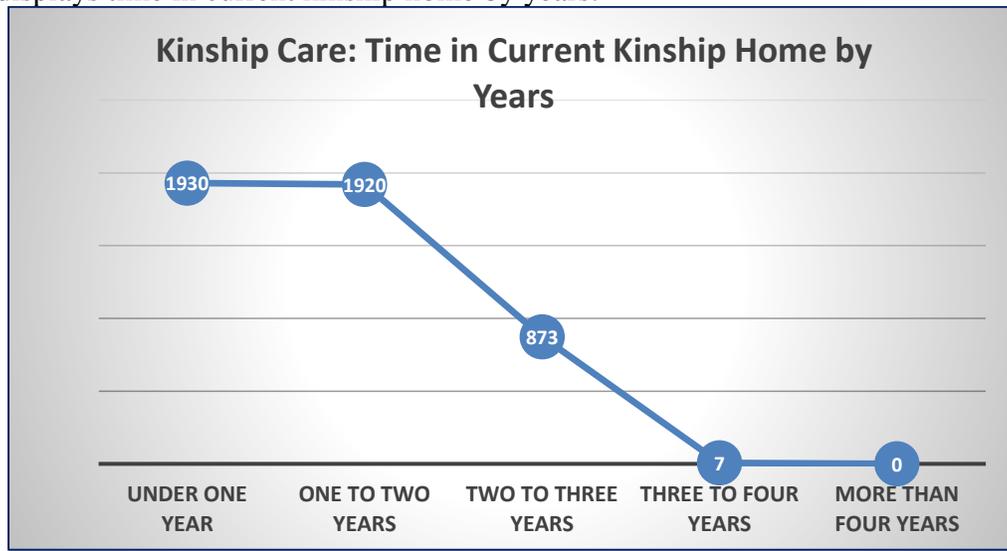


<sup>2</sup> These average allotments do not include Child Developmental Homes (CDH) which are licensed through the Department of Economic Security/Division of Developmental Disabilities/Office of Licensing, Regulation and Certification. Adjusted monthly allotted rates including all allowances would increase to \$1,063.88.

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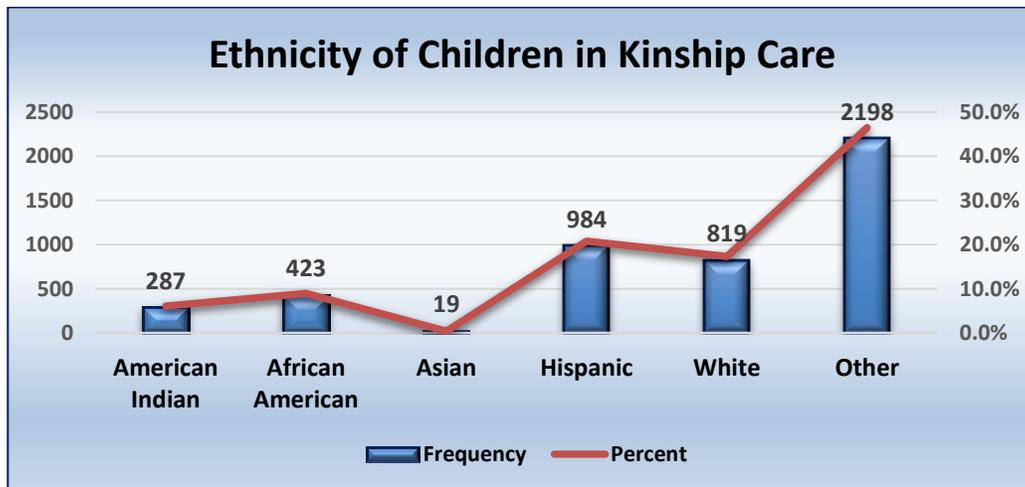
Children residing in kinship care on June 30, 2023 spent 53 percent of their total time in out-of-home care with a kinship caregiver. Most children in kinship care, 82 percent, lived with their kinship caregiver up to two years.

Chart 2 displays time in current kinship home by years:



N = 4,730

Chart 3 displays the ethnicity of children in kinship care<sup>3</sup>. Comparing SFY 2022 to SFY 2023, the ethnicity of children in kinship care remained consistent. Fifty-one percent of children in kinship care are female and forty-nine percent are male.



N = 4,730

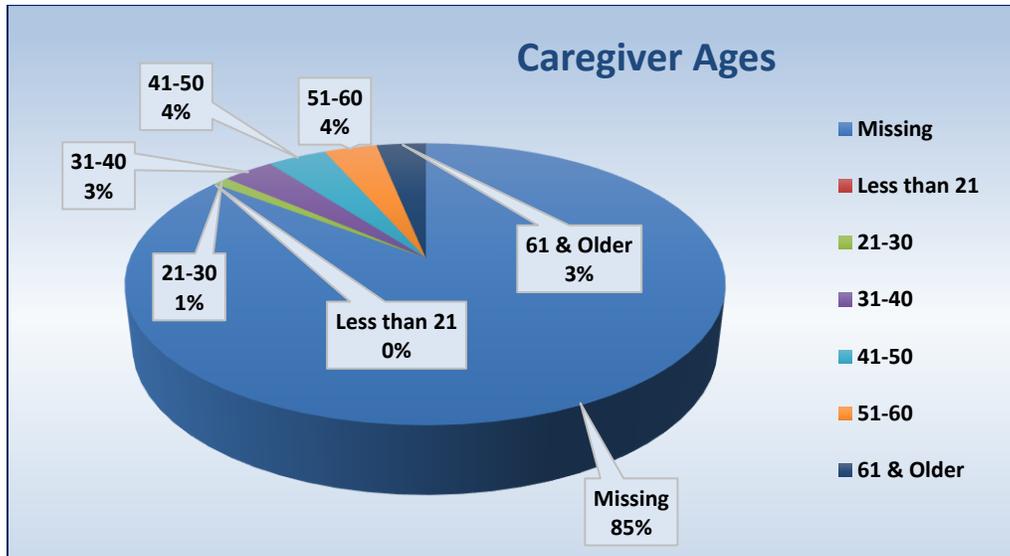
<sup>3</sup> The Department is conducting a quality review of this data and will submit an updated version of this report upon completion.

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**Demographic Data of Kinship Caregivers**

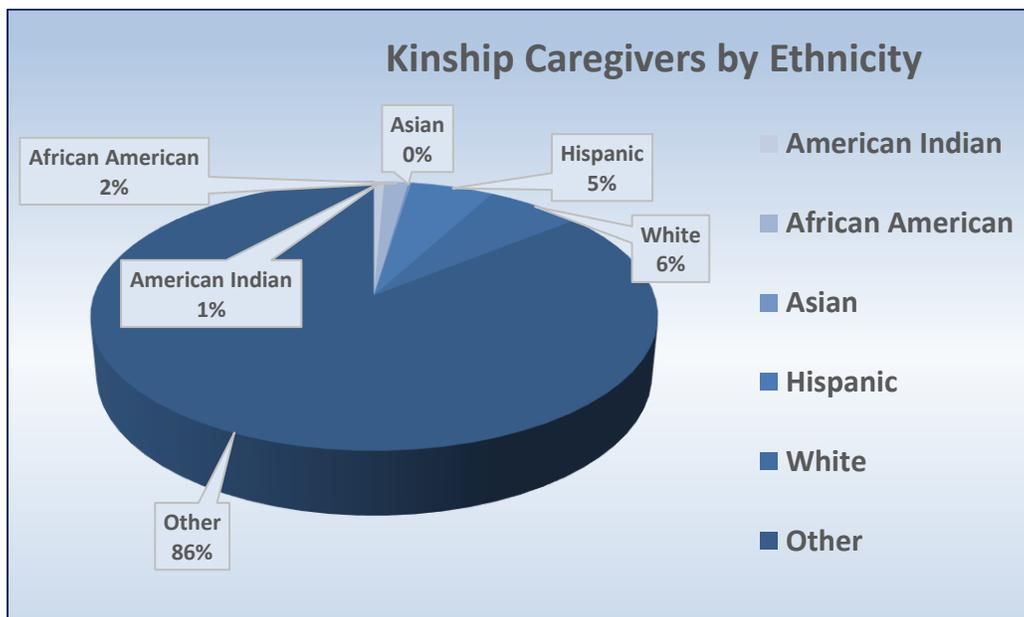
As of June 30, 2023, there were 3,122 kinship caregivers. This represents a sixteen percent decrease from the 3,716 kinship caregivers in SFY 2022. The Department is conducting quality assurance reviews of missing ages and ethnicities for caregivers.

Chart 4 displays the percentages of kinship caregivers by age brackets:



N = 3,122

Chart 5 displays the ethnicity of kinship caregivers:



N = 3122

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**Efforts to Achieve Success at Maintaining Kinship Caregivers Placements**

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) values and supports our kinship caregivers. The Department has implemented the following:

During SFY 2022, the Kinship Program Supervisors and Kinship Support Specialists continued its efforts to support field staff to place children with kin and maintain kinship caregiver living arrangements.

The Statewide Placement Administration (SPA) was formed in 2017. This administration coordinates requests for licensed caregivers for children in out-of-home care; supports kinship caregivers by providing or directing kin to tangible resources including emergency food, clothing, beds, infant care items, etc.; and has aided struggling kinship caregivers to help resolve barriers to maintaining children in their homes. Under the SPA, Kinship Support Specialists (KSS) conduct outreach and support to kinship caregivers. Kinship Engagement Support Specialists (KESS) at the SPA support field staff in seeking connections and/or kinship caregivers for children and youth recently entering into care.

There are two statewide KESS that find and engage potential relatives with children in care. Once relatives are engaged and inquire about being considered for a child's caregiver, the KESS completes several actions for field staff. The KESS completes criminal background checks, attends the TDM with field staff, assists with the kinship home assessment, and drafts the motion for change of physical custody (CPC). Once the CPC is ordered by the juvenile court, the KESS completes the placement and Kinship Support actions to include the 30, 50 and 80 day follow-up. The kinship support closes the kinship caregiver at 80 days. The kinship support team will accept and assist kinship caregivers after the 80 days. There are nine KSS positions statewide that provide resources and support services to unlicensed kinship caregivers. The Kinship Specialists provide initial information for the unlicensed kinship family along with connecting them to services and material items needed. KSS follows up with Kinship families at 30, 50 and 80 days to ensure caregivers needs are met. We have six Kinship Support Case Aides that assist with TANF and deliveries.

DCS has also made efforts to strengthen relationships with community organizations that support kinship caregivers to ensure they have the most accurate and up to date information about the DCS Kinship Program. KSS Supervisors attend a collaborative monthly meeting with community organizations to ensure there is up to date information about new and changing resources for kinship caregivers. This meeting is also utilized to remain informed about community actions related to kinship caregivers. Kinship Supervisors and Specialists attend the collaborative meeting which is facilitated by AVIVA Children's Services. The Kinship Coalition, facilitated by Casey Family Programs, meets every two months and includes community agencies, licensing agencies and community persons interested in Kinship Care. The Coalition seeks to develop new resources in collaboration with others to address kinship caregiver needs. These groups exchange information on community events and support groups happening for our Kinship caregivers.

KSS and KESS conduct outreach activities through phone calls, mailings, and in-person information sessions to inform kin about their role as a foster caregiver, and provide critical

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information on meeting the needs of the children in their care. The DCS Mercy Care Comprehensive Health Plan (CHP) continues its outreach to caregivers when children are placed in their homes, which includes assistance with appointment scheduling, follow up with specialty health care providers, referrals to other community/agency resources, and care coordination with caregivers and health providers for children/youth with special health care needs. Caregivers receive contact information so they may contact DCS Mercy Care CHP Member Services should any issues or concerns arise or simply need to know what their rights are in accessing services for the children in their care. There was a total of 1,277 kinship support requests.

KSS and KESS procured and delivered 3,633 items to include clothing, kinship folder, diapers/pull ups, car seats, hygiene bags, wipes, food boxes, backpacks/cinch bags/luggage, beds, and birthday in a bag (cake mix, frosting, birthday banner, candles, pin, balloons and cake pans). KSS and KESS provided 4,851 services that included; TANF (1417), billing paperwork, community referrals, allowances, kinship folder, Guardian portal access, fingerprints and daycare/afterschool care.

The Kinship Foster Care booklet and Go-To-Guide continues to be distributed and is available in English and Spanish. The booklet was revised June 2022 and provides extensive information for kinship caregivers, including DCS expectations for the care and supervision of children in DCS care, benefits and services available to children in their care, licensing process and waivers, and information about other pertinent subjects.

The Statewide Kinship Support Supervisors monitor regional efforts and provides support through technical assistance and training, statewide. Examples of current efforts include the following:

- Kinship Support teams work collaboratively to meet the needs of rural kinship caregivers.
- Applied for Kinship Navigator Program Grant in Spring 2021. In September 2023, DCS was awarded the Kinship Navigator Program Grant again for federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024).
- Kinship Support Specialists and Supervisors provide Information Sessions to DCS staff during monthly regional meetings throughout the year. This information session provides an overview of the activities required to secure and finalize a kinship caregiver, and the delivery of support services; emphasizes the importance of understanding the kinship perspective; and builds sensitivity regarding the involvement of child welfare with the family and other issues. 41 presentations were delivered to staff statewide.

DCS updated standard work and a statewide Caregiver Assessment Tool (CAT) to be used by the Statewide Placement Team to aide in the living arrangement decision making process for children requiring out-of-home care. The assessment tool takes many factors into account, including if a kin caregiver is available to care for the child, the child's behaviors and special needs, if the child is part of a sibling group, and if a previous out-of-home caregiver is available to care for the child. DCS policy outlines the importance of diligent efforts to identify and notify all adult relatives and adults with significant relationships to the child of their option to become the living arrangement for the child in out-of-home care, within 30 days of the child's removal. DCS continues to conduct

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searches for relatives prior to key decision points in the case. State policy directs staff to conduct searches at least once every six months.

The Department implemented the Kinship Placement Decision Tool in February 2023 in order to help guide DCS Field Specialists on crucial staffing points when assessing for kinship living arrangements and to assist in ruling all possible kinship in as a potential living arrangement for a youth. The Department continues to utilize a Practice Guidelines and this tool for assessing and supporting kinship caregivers. The Practice Guidelines and Kinship Placement Decision Tool assist field staff through the initial assessment process to increase the number of children placed in kinship homes.

DCS continues to provide kinship caregivers with necessary information and resources to ensure that the child(ren) placed with them are properly cared for and kin are supported, reducing the trauma to children entering out-of-home care and avoiding more costly living arrangements. Kinship home studies are conducted by Southwest Human Development (SWHD), Pinnacle Employment Services, Intermountain and Arizona's Children's Association through a contract with the Department. Staff visit the kinship homes early in the placement process to conduct the home studies and provide information on resources available through DCS and community-based agencies (including licensing, financial, social and educational resources).

DCS Specialists are encouraged to discuss the importance of foster home licensure with relative caregivers at the time of placement and subsequent to placement. On a case-by-case basis, the Department works with the Office of Licensing and Regulation (OLR) and contracted licensing agencies to grant waivers of non-safety related licensing standards that would prevent kinship caregivers from becoming licensed. The waivers most often relate to some aspect of the sleeping arrangements to accommodate sibling groups. A smaller number relate to income requirements or certain flexibilities needed to complete necessary training.

The Department continues to partner with the Department of Economic Security's Family Assistance Administration (FAA) to troubleshoot TANF Cash Assistance applications. DCS and FAA maintain designated staff that coordinate and assist with applications, and the process for kinship families to apply for benefits has been improved to decrease errors and delays. A centralized eligibility determination process developed in 2016 continues and includes a unique e-mail address for applications. State legislation was passed to lift the TANF "benefit cap" that previously prevented a child from receiving TANF if his or her mother was receiving cash assistance at the time she gave birth to a child. Kinship Support teams provided 1,417 kinship caregivers with TANF Child-Only benefits.

The Care Portal connects DCS families to local churches who want to serve their communities by providing basic goods and services in an effort to keep families together, reunify families, and support kinship caregivers. This is a secondary and tertiary prevention program, in as much as it serves all DCS families as well as young adults who reach adulthood in foster care. The Care Portal addresses a large range of needs, such as cribs, beds, furniture, home or car repairs, and assistance eliminating lice.

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In 2018, the Department expanded the DCS Warmline support to be available to all Kinship families. This assists with easier access to getting questions answered and receiving assistance with setting up benefits such as TANF, DES daycare and any questions with the Kinship Stipend Program.

**Conclusion**

Unlicensed kinship care accounts for 47 percent of the children in out-of-home care in Arizona. This percentage continues to exceed the national rate of 35 percent and is reflective of Arizona's commitment to prioritize kin as the first preference for children who require out-of-home care. As the Department continues to expand its services and supports available to kinship caregivers, it emphasizes the most critical role family and fictive kin have in a child's life. These are life-long sustainable and loving relationships. If you ask a youth in out-of-home care who they may want to spend Thanksgiving with in ten years, most would identify a family member or significant person in their life with whom they want a lifetime relationship.

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**INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM/EDUCATION**

[Arizona Revised Statutes § 8-521](#) establishes Arizona's Independent Living Program and the supporting Educational Case Management Unit within the Department of Child Safety.

The Independent Living Program and the Educational Case Management Unit provide important services that assist foster youth in setting and meeting educational and life skills goals and outcomes. These services are available to teens that are currently in foster care as well as young adults aged 18-20 years who were in foster care when they were teenagers. Services include individualized assistance to remove barriers to high school graduation (such as interventions for credit recovery, expediting enrollment, etc.) and to identify and enroll in post-secondary programs, including accessing scholarship and grant opportunities. Young adults over 17 years of age in the Independent Living Program may be continuing enrollment in a traditional or alternative secondary education program, enrolled in postsecondary education, or have completed graduation or attained a general equivalency diploma and chosen to work full-time rather than pursue secondary education.

As required by [A.R.S. § 8-526 \(E\) \(11\)](#), the following information is provided for 2023:

*The number of youth in the Independent Living Program:* The population of youth represented in this annual report are youth in out-of-home care age 16 and older with a primary or concurrent permanency goal of Independent Living. On June 30, 2023 there were 1,296 youth in the Independent Living Program.

*The number of youth in the program by age:*

Age	Number of Youth
16	132
17	378
18	357
19	237
20	192
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,296</b>

*The number of youth in the program by education status in School Year (SY) 2023:*

SY 2023 Grade Level <sup>1</sup>	Number of Youth
Below 9	2
9	50
10	137
11	357
12	421
Post-Secondary <sup>2</sup>	82
Not in School <sup>3</sup>	247
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,296</b>

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*The number of youth in the program by county of residence:*

County	Number of Youth
Apache	2
Cochise	28
Coconino	26
Gila	16
Graham	8
Greenlee	2
La Paz	6
Maricopa	709
Mohave	26
Navajo	26
Pima	217
Pinal	61
Santa Cruz	3
Yavapai	46
Yuma	41
Out-of-State	79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,296</b>

# Youth in the Independent Living Program who have a high school or general education diploma: 249

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<sup>1</sup> *Grade Level* includes youth in secondary level alternative, credit recovery, and GED Programs.

<sup>2</sup> *Post-Secondary* education includes youth enrolled in colleges, universities, community colleges, and trade/technical schools.

<sup>3</sup> *Not in school* includes youth who have completed secondary education and are not currently enrolled in a post-secondary program. Youth "not in school" are engaged in workforce or other activities (i.e. therapeutic) as outlined in their individual case plans.

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**HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

[A.R.S. § 8-526\(E\)](#) requires the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) to make the following information regarding the Housing Assistance Program available to the public upon request and available on the Department’s website:

- The number of children and families, by Region, receiving services through this program during the previous fiscal year.
- The total amount of monies spent on the program by Region.
- A programmatic and fiscal evaluation of the effectiveness of this program, which includes the amount of monies saved by reducing foster care expenditures.

To be eligible for the Housing Assistance Program, the following criteria must be met:

- At least one child is a participant in an open Department of Child Safety (DCS) case;
- Housing assistance is needed to expedite a permanent placement for the child;
- Lack of safe and adequate housing is a significant barrier to family preservation, family reunification or achievement of the permanency plan for at least one child;
- Family income, including entitlements, is insufficient to cover housing expenses;
- The family is willing to develop and participate in a time-oriented plan to maintain housing obtained through this program; and
- All other sources of assistance have been fully explored and used before considering this program.

**Number Served**

In SFY 2023, the Housing Assistance Program served 265 children in 58 families.

<b>REGION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>	<b>NUMBER OF FAMILIES</b>
Maricopa East (East Maricopa County)	61	20
South (Pima, Yuma, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties)	43	10
Northwest (Mohave, La Paz, Yavapai, and Coconino, Counties)	10	1
Northeast (Apache, Navajo, Pinal, Gila, Graham, and Greenlee Counties)	11	1
Maricopa West (West Maricopa County)	140	30
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>58</b>

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Effective July 1, 2019, DCS realigned and renamed its Regions. This project moved several counties and individual to different regions. Thus, current data cannot be compared to prior regional data.

**Cost of Service**

The total amount expended statewide for the Housing Assistance Program in SFY 2022 was \$456,556.92.

<b>REGION</b>	<b>TOTAL MONIES EXPENDED</b>
Maricopa East (East Maricopa County)	\$105,566.67
South (Pima, Yuma, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties)	\$69,944.59
Northwest (Mohave, La Paz, Yavapai, and Coconino, Counties)	\$16,718.00
Northeast (Apache, Navajo, Pinal, Gila, Graham, and Greenlee Counties)	\$19,374.30
Maricopa West (West Maricopa County)	\$244,953.36
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$456,556.92</b>

**Results of Service**

The Housing Assistance Program improves the ability of DCS to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children who are the subject of a DCS report and investigation, or participants in an ongoing services case.

In a cost-effective manner, the Housing Assistance Program provides families who have open DCS cases with needed housing and utility assistance to meet their health, safety, and shelter needs, when such assistance is not available through other programs.

In SFY 2023, the average length of stay in out-of-home placement prior to reunification was 308 days (10.1 months). An estimated \$2,039,332 would have been expended by DCS for foster care maintenance payments (licensed foster home, personal and clothing allowance) at an average cost of \$761.94 per month/per child if the 265 children who benefited from the Housing Assistance Program during SFY 2023 had entered or remained in foster care for the average length of stay of 10.1 months. Based on the SFY 2023 Housing Assistance Program expenditures of \$456,557, there is potential cost avoidance of \$1,582,775.

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Table 2 displays the number of children who benefitted from the Housing Assistance Program and the average monthly cost of licensed foster care, which includes maintenance payment, and personal and clothing allowances.

**Table 2: Number of Children and Average Monthly Cost**

Total Number of Children Benefited	265
Licensed Foster Home Monthly Average	\$761.94

Table 3 displays the estimated expenditures DCS would have expended on foster care payments if the children benefitting from the program had been in foster for 10.1 months. It also displays the total expenditures for SFY23 for the Housing Assistance Program and the potential cost avoidance.

**Table 3: Cost Avoidance**

Estimated DCS Expenditures for 10.1 Months	\$2,039,332
Housing Assistance Program Expenditures	\$456,557
Program Potential Cost Avoidance	\$1,582,775