



DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY
ANNUAL SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES REPORT

State Fiscal Year 2024

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.

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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**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 32 percent<sup>1</sup>. As of June 30, 2024, the percentage of children and youth placed with a relative (licensed and unlicensed) was 47.9 percent, a 0.7 percent increase from SFY 2023 when 47.2 percent of children were placed with a relative<sup>2</sup>.

**Arizona Kinship Foster Care Program Description**<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway, Bulletins for Professionals: Working With Kinship Caregivers, 2018,

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/kinship.pdf#page=2&view=Trends%20in%20kinship%20care> (accessed 20 October 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Data was extracted on 11-4-21 from the DCS case management system based upon an Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) data run for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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state. More importantly though, kinship care significantly reduces the trauma a child experiences when entering out of home care and results in better overall well-being for the child and family.

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 9,221 in June 2024. The number of children less than eighteen years of age in out-of-home (OOH) care on June 30, 2024 was 8,305 compared to 10,016 on June 30, 2023, which represents a seventeen percent decrease. The number of licensed foster homes in June 2024 was 2,049 compared to 2,537 in June 2023, which represents a nineteen percent decrease.

***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, 2024, there were 295 kinship caregivers licensed as foster parents compared to 430<sup>4</sup> licensed kinship caregivers reported in the previous annual report (SFY 2023). The current 295 licensed kinship caregivers provide out-of-home care for 90 children in foster care. With the new Kinship Support Services contract, a new license type will be reflected in future data point highlighting kinship who are licensed under the new contract.

***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, 2024, there were 2,649 unlicensed kinship caregivers providing homes to children in foster care. This is a 13 percent decrease from the 3,054 unlicensed kinship caregivers reported in the SFY 2023 annual report. The current 2,649 unlicensed kinship caregivers provided out-of-home care to 3,736 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 Health Plan (CHP), which is an AHCCCS (Title XIX Medicaid) health plan.
- *Nurturing Parenting Program* – The Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP) is a trauma-informed program from the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) that helps families at risk of abuse or neglect develop positive parenting skills.
- *Family Connections*- Family Connections (FC) is a trauma-informed and empowering service, provided to families in the context of their own communities and cultures. Family Connections provides change-focused interventions to achieve core outcomes of improved social support, family functioning, family resources, child well-being, parenting attitudes and behaviors, and management of parenting stress.
- *Parent skills training* - Training is provided for kinship foster caregivers to enhance their parenting knowledge and skills.

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<sup>4</sup> This data has been corrected from the prior fiscal year report.

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- *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* - twelve days or up to 288 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.
- *Kinship Support Services (KSS) Referral*- The Department of Child Safety believes that kinship care is the most preferred and healthy setting for children who cannot remain safely in their home of origin. When children are with kinship caregivers, there is reduced trauma and children are able to thrive. In these circumstances, kinship care is achieved through ongoing support by enhancing the knowledge and skills of families, prior, during and post a child being in out-of-home care.

The goal by providing this service is to further increase the number of children in kinship homes, improve the supports required to stabilize living arrangements and assist families in navigating the child welfare system. The Department is a “kin-first” organization and kinship caregivers should be “ruled-in,” not out. Kinship caregivers should be supported and aided in removing barriers to having kin in their homes. The Department should continually revisit kinship caregivers who may have been previously ruled out as potential caregivers to examine if prior obstacles have been or could be resolved.

If applicable, support shall include but not limited to:

- Home Assessments
- Kinship Navigation (Monitoring of the home environment, Initial and ongoing training, retention efforts, and ongoing family support, before and after placement)
- Initial and Renewal Licensing
- Initial Adoption Certification and Extensions
- Courtesy Supervision
- Guardian Annual Review Reports

Kinship navigation is provided concurrently with Home Assessments and/or licensing process and continues until case closure. Kinship caregivers are encouraged to become licensed for increase supports and stability of children residing in kinship homes. The Office of Licensing and Regulation (OLR) has introduced kinship waivers, reduced the

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requirements for kinship caregivers to become licensed, and created an expedited path for licensing.

Who is eligible for KSS?

- Kinship caregivers who express interest in becoming foster care licensed or are in need of support
- Kinship caregivers who need to become certified to adopt
- Kinship caregivers who have been granted guardianship or have a pending annual guardianship review hearing
- Children placed in kinship homes need courtesy supervision

**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 \$41.17 per month for unlicensed kinship caregivers. The allotted amount for clothing allowances is \$43.54 per month. The total amount allotted is \$384.70 per child for kinship caregivers (\$447.20 per child if diapers are provided). This compares to an average monthly cost of family foster care (licensed kinship and licensed non-kinship) of \$848.44 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)**

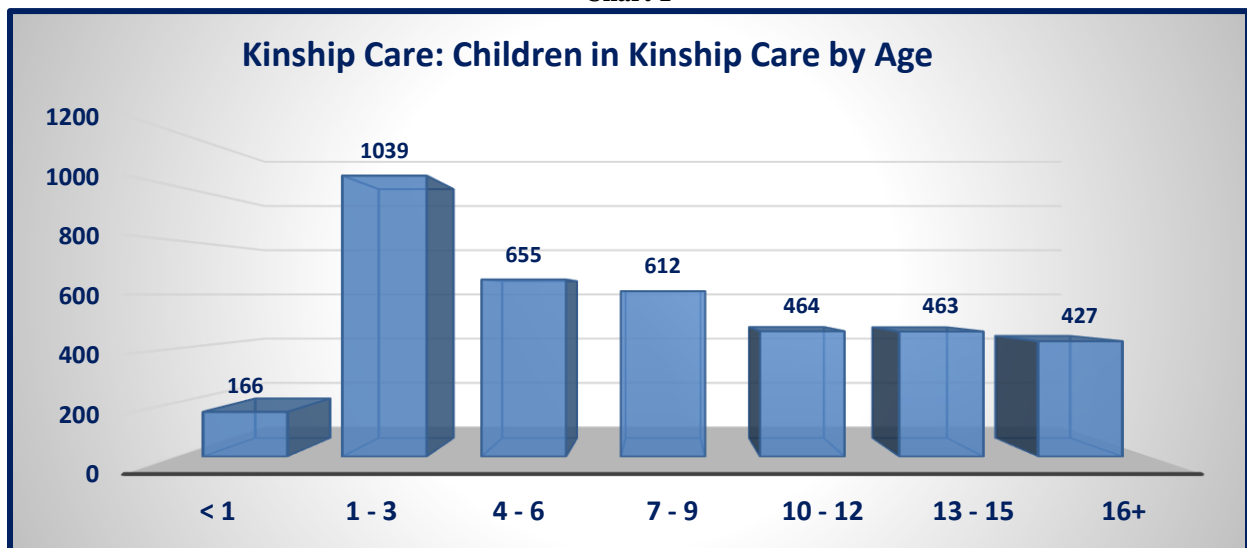
Service	Unlicensed Kinship	Licensed Kinship	Licensed Non-Kinship
Foster Care Maintenance Payments (0-11 year old)	\$300.00 (Kinship Stipend)	\$701.40	\$701.40
Foster Care Maintenance Payments (12-18+ year old)	\$300.00 (Kinship Stipend)	\$701.40	\$701.40
Personal Allowance	\$41.17	\$43.78	\$43.78
Clothing Allowance	\$43.54	\$40.90	\$40.90
Foster Care/Stipend, Personal and Clothing Allowances combined	\$384.70	\$786.09	\$786.09
Diaper Allowance	\$62.50	\$62.50	\$62.50
Foster Care/Stipend, Diaper, Personal and Clothing Allowances combined <sup>5</sup>	\$447.20	\$848.59	\$848.59

**Demographic Data about Children in Kinship Care**

As of June 30, 2024, there were 3,826 children in licensed and unlicensed kinship care, which was 46 percent of the total out-of-home care population of 8,305 children ages zero to seventeen. The average age for children in kinship care was 7.25 years. The largest percentage of children in kinship care, 27.2 percent (1,039), are between ages one and three.

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

**Chart 1**



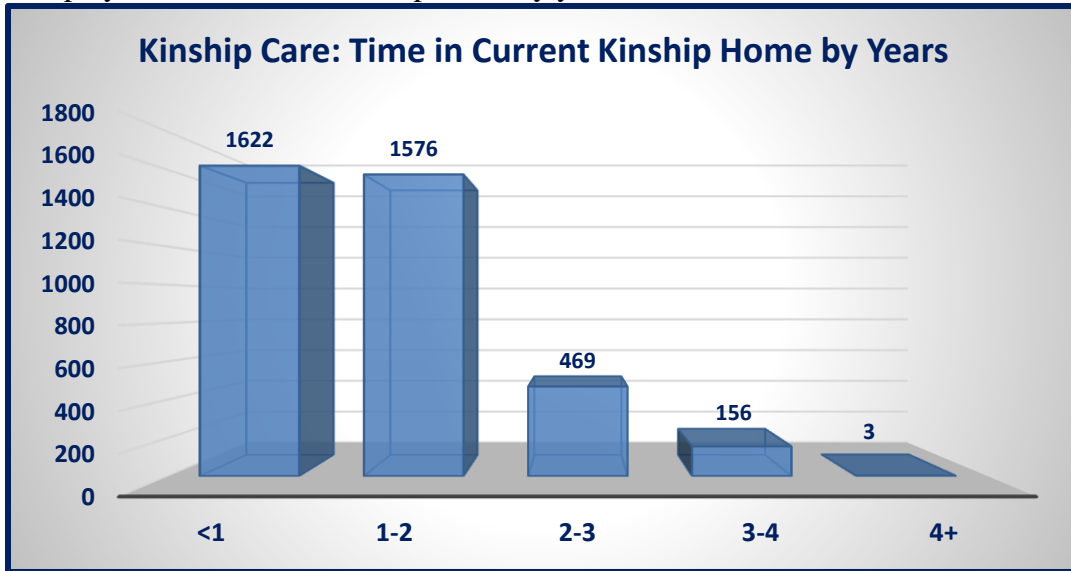
N= 3,826

<sup>5</sup> These average allotments do not include Child Developmental Homes (CDH) which are licensed through the Department of Economic Security (DES)/Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)/Office of Licensing, Regulation and Certification (OLCR). 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, 2024 spent 52 percent of their total time in out-of-home care with a kinship caregiver. Most children in kinship care, 84 percent, lived with their kinship caregiver up to two years.

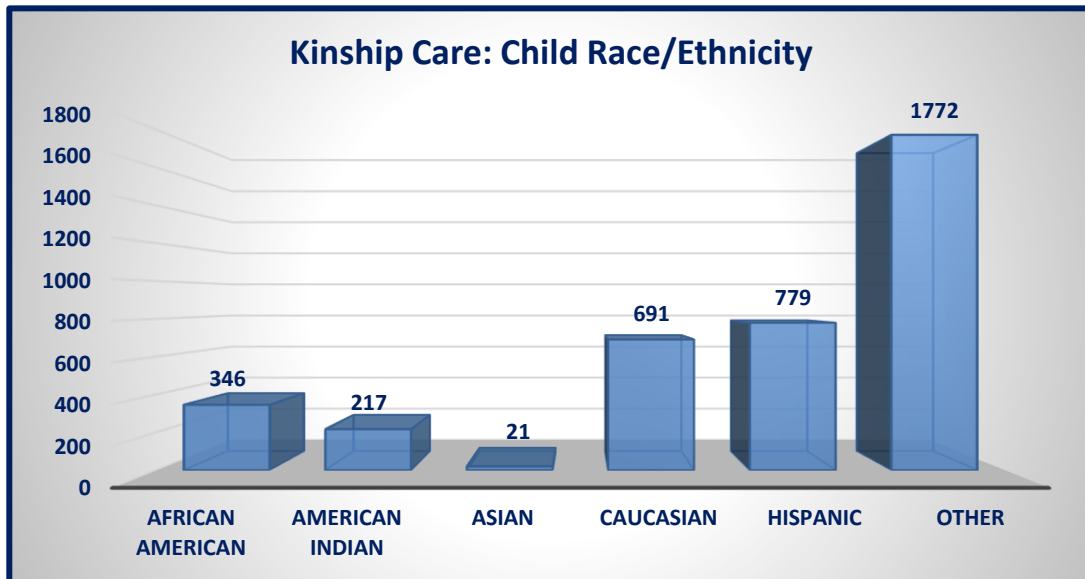
*Chart 2 displays time in current kinship home by years:*



**N = 3,826**

Chart 3 displays the ethnicity of children in kinship care. Comparing SFY 2023 to SFY 2024, 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.

*Chart 3*



**N = 3,826**

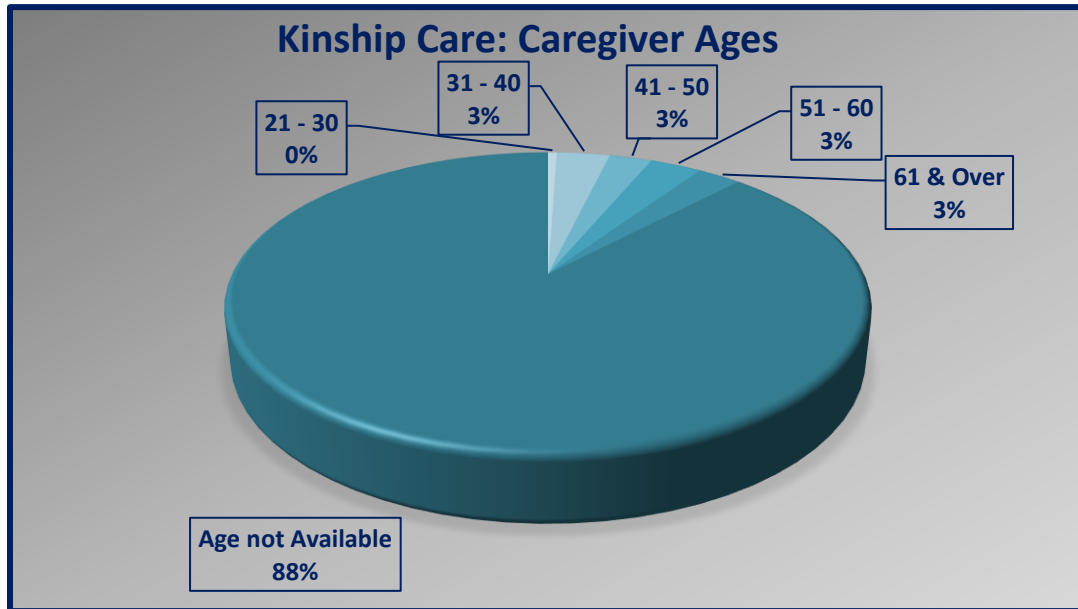
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**Demographic Data of Kinship Caregivers**

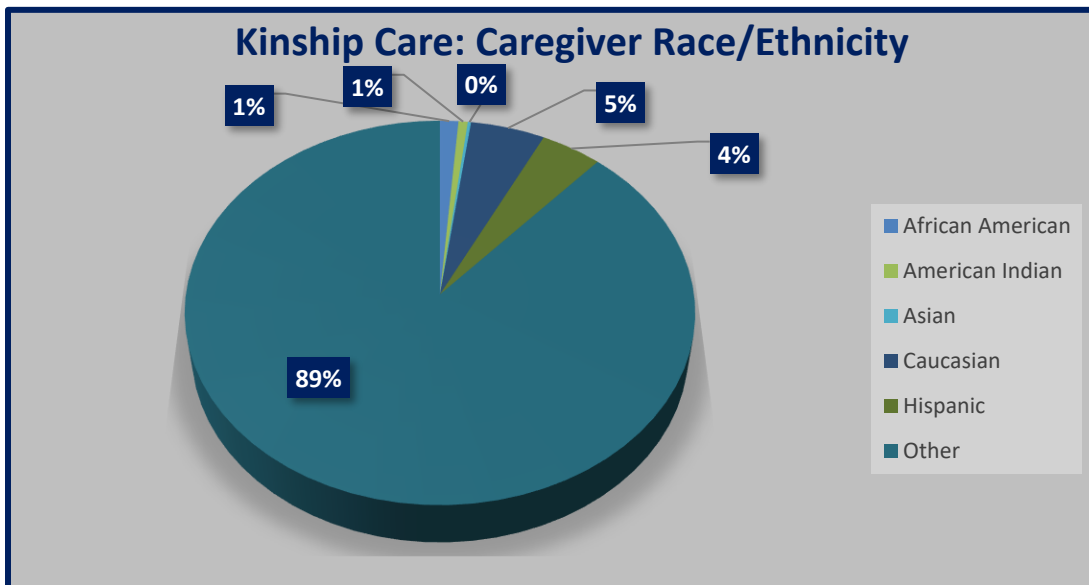
As of June 30, 2024, there were 2,649 kinship caregivers. This represents a fifteen percent decrease over the 3,122 kinship caregivers in SFY 2023. The Department is conducting quality assurance reviews of missing ages and ethnicities for caregivers.

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



N = 2,649

Chart 5 displays the ethnicity of kinship caregivers:



N = 2,649



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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 2023, the Department of Child Safety released a new contract where we have 14 agencies that provide Kinship Navigation, a home assessment and Kinship Licensing. Any potential kinship option can be referred to this service and assessed. Once a child is placed, they can become licensed and be provided with the kinship navigation services and the kinship licensing. The licensing is on an expedited path for kinship caregivers. The Department's goal is to license families for kinship care in 60-90 days. This will allow kinship placements to have more funds for the children they are caring for and also more resources and support throughout the case.

The agencies are able to provide the families with tangible resources including emergency food, clothing, beds, infant care items, etc.; and have aided struggling kinship caregivers to help resolve barriers to maintaining children in their homes. The agencies help the families apply for TANF when they first come into care and do an extensive application process with them. There are two Kinship Specialists that aid in supporting the agencies when they have barriers and help provide solutions.

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 Support Services Contract. The Caregiver Support Supervisor and Kinship Specialists 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. The Caregiver Support Supervisor 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 which 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.

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.

The Kinship Foster Care booklet and Go-To-Guide continue 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.

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The Statewide Caregiver Support Supervisor, Foster Supports Manager and Program Administrator for OLR 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 and assists the agencies when needed.
- Applied for Kinship Navigator Program Grant in Spring 2024. In September 2024, DCS was awarded the Kinship Navigator Program Grant again for federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025).
- Kinship Specialists, Caregiver Support Supervisor, Foster Supports Manager and OLR Program Administrator provide Information Sessions to DCS staff during monthly regional meetings throughout the year.

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 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 assists field staff through the initial assessment process to increase the number of children placed in kinship homes.

DCS and contracted kinship agencies continue 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 the contracted kinship agencies when referred. 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

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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, certain flexibilities needed to complete necessary training, and fingerprint card waivers for the applicant.

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. In 2024, DES set up a special call in line. The Kinship caregiver can call them back on this line and complete their application if they missed a scheduled call. 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.

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.

The DCS Warmline support is available to all Kinship and Licensed 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. The DCS Warmline is set to go live by the end of 2024.

### **Conclusion**

Kinship care accounts for 43.9 percent of the children in out-of-home care in Arizona. This percentage continues to exceed the national rate of 33 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 both 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 2024:

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, 2024 there were 1,763 youth in the Independent Living Program.

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

Age	Number of Youth
16	191
17	405
18	560
19	334
20	273
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,763</b>

*The number of youth in the program by education status in School Year (SY) 2024:*

SY 2023 Grade Level <sup>1</sup>	Number of Youth
Below 9	1
9	51
10	209
11	357
12	646
Post-Secondary <sup>2</sup>	214
Not in School <sup>3</sup>	285
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,763</b>

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

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of Youth</b>
Apache	7
Cochise	33
Coconino	30
Gila	16
Graham	10
Greenlee	1
La Paz	5
Maricopa	1,033
Mohave	43
Navajo	20
Pima	291
Pinal	76
Santa Cruz	3
Yavapai	53
Yuma	43
Out-of-State	99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,763</b>

# Youth in the Independent Living Program who have a high school or general education diploma: 459

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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 2024, the Housing Assistance Program served 877 children in 365 families.

<b>REGION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>	<b>NUMBER OF FAMILIES</b>
Maricopa East (East Maricopa County)	358	142
South (Pima, Yuma, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties)	131	60
Northwest (Mohave, La Paz, Yavapai, and Coconino, Counties)	14	6
Northeast (Apache, Navajo, Pinal, Gila, Graham, and Greenlee Counties)	16	9
Maricopa West (West Maricopa County)	358	148
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>365</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 2024 was \$571,791.17.

<b>REGION</b>	<b>TOTAL MONIES EXPENDED</b>
Maricopa East (East Maricopa County)	\$231,526.44
South (Pima, Yuma, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties)	\$92,097.68
Northwest (Mohave, La Paz, Yavapai, and Coconino, Counties)	\$7,780.25
Northeast (Apache, Navajo, Pinal, Gila, Graham, and Greenlee Counties)	\$12,562.04
Maricopa West (West Maricopa County)	\$227,824.76
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$571,791.17</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 2024, the average length of stay in out-of-home placement prior to reunification was 340 days (11.2 months). An estimated \$7,721,290.42 would have been expended by DCS for foster care maintenance payments (licensed foster home, personal and clothing allowance) at an average cost of \$786.09 per month/per child if the 877 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 11.2 months. Based on the SFY 2024 Housing Assistance Program expenditures of \$571,791.17, there is potential cost avoidance of \$7,149,499.25.

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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	877
Licensed Foster Home Monthly Average	\$786.09

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 11.2 Months	\$7,721,290.42
Housing Assistance Program Expenditures	\$571,791.17
Program Potential Cost Avoidance	\$7,149,499.25