

Implementing the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act

The [Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act](#) (the SGRG Act) was signed into law on July 7, 2018. One of the primary aims of the SGRG Act is to heighten visibility and address the need for better support, information, and services to assist kinship families and grandfamilies.

The Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Key among the SGRG Act's provisions was the establishment of the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (the Advisory Council). The Advisory Council's primary charge is to identify, promote, coordinate, and disseminate information, resources, and the best practices available to help grandparents and other older relatives meet the needs of the children in their care while maintaining their own physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Composed of both kin and grandparent caregivers and professionals in the field, the Advisory Council adopted the following vision to shape and guide its work:

"The Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren will be a leader for identifying and sharing resources to support, educate, empower, and advocate for kinship families and grandfamilies. The Advisory Council will increase awareness and understanding of the needs of these families to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity. By honoring cultures, values, and diversities, we will create a better future so that families can flourish."

Following its first meeting in August 2019, the Advisory Council started gathering information to draft the report required by the SGRG Act. Then, responding to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic became a priority. In addition to gathering information for the report, the Advisory Council began developing its first resource—tackling the unique challenges kinship families and grandfamilies may experience during emergencies.

Emergency Preparedness for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies

Any emergency has the potential to disrupt the balance within a family. Whether it is a public health emergency, a weather event, a flooded basement, or parental death or incarceration, becoming the primary caregiver of a child is an unexpected situation for which there is little time to prepare. During emergencies, challenges are amplified for kinship families and grandfamilies. Recognizing this, the Advisory Council developed its [COVID-19/Emergency Preparedness Resource Guide for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies](#) to assist kinship families and grandfamilies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This critical resource was the first product developed by the Advisory Council as part of its commitment to identifying and disseminating information and best practices to support kinship families and grandfamilies. It features a collection of three dozen vetted sources of information and assistance from federal, state, and local entities that could be of value to any kin or grandparent caregiver during a crisis.

The Initial Report to Congress

The Advisory Council's initial report to Congress addresses a broad range of subjects as identified in the SGRG Act. Its development took place during 2020 and 2021, resulting in a document that provides:

- » An examination of the challenges and unmet needs of kinship families and grandfamilies.
- » An identification of the systemic gaps that exist in supporting these families.
- » A compendium of resources and best practices currently used in the field.
- » A slate of 22 recommendations for improving the recognition and support of kinship families and grandfamilies, which will become part of the forthcoming National Family Caregiving Strategy.

Throughout the report, the needs of members of tribal communities and those impacted by the opioid crisis are considered, and descriptions of a range of federal programs and initiatives currently in place to support kinship families and grandfamilies are provided.

Looking Ahead to a National Family Caregiving Strategy

The Advisory Council came together in late 2019 to address the multiple and often overlooked challenges faced by kinship families and grandfamilies. Their initial goal was to develop a set of recommendations to improve awareness of and services and supports for this vulnerable population. The recommendations they developed after an extended investigative process cover five priority areas that allow for maximum integration of federal, state, local, and tribal initiatives to support kinship families and grandfamilies.

Taken together, these priorities are a critical first step in better supporting the people who selflessly step in to raise a child.



The report's 22 recommendations will inform the development of the National Family Caregiving Strategy, which is being developed by the Advisory Council in collaboration with the [RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council](#). When fully developed, the strategy will identify actions that communities, providers, government, and others are taking and may take to recognize and support family caregivers. It will promote greater adoption of person- and family-centered care in all health care and long-term service and support settings, increase use of evidence-informed tools, information, education, training supports, referral, and care coordination to increase support for caregivers and expand access to respite options. Finally, it will increase financial security and reduce workplace discrimination faced by caregivers, including kin and grandparent caregivers.

Learn more about the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act at [ACL.gov/SGRG](https://acl.gov/SGRG).