



## **GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

*October 20, 2020*

On October 20, 2020, the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG) Advisory Council finalized twenty-two recommendations intended to advance change and improve supports to Kinship Families and Grandfamilies of all ages. The following recommendations grew out of months of discussion, examination of relevant data and public input from kinship and grandparent caregivers as well as community organizations and state government agencies. They address critical priority areas including awareness of, and outreach, to Kinship Families and Grandfamily caregivers and the importance of their engagement as key partners in healthcare delivery and long-term services and supports; strengthening community-based services and supports; ensuring financial and workplace security; and greater focus on research, data, and evidence-supported practices to ensure Kinship Families and Grandfamilies receive support in a fair and impartial manner considering the physical, cultural, emotional, and financial impact to create a better future for these families to flourish.

These recommendations will be included in the SGRG Council's initial Report to Congress in 2021 and add to the foundation for the National Family Caregiving Strategy that will begin development next year. The Strategy will outline critical actions that can be taken at the federal, state levels, by local communities as well as health, long-term services providers and others to better support family caregivers in ways that reflect their diverse needs. The Strategy will focus on areas such as person and family-centered care; assessment and service planning; information, education and training supports; respite options; and financial and workplace security issues. The Strategy will provide a roadmap for the nation to strengthen its support and recognition of the critical role family caregivers' play in our healthcare and long-term support systems.

## **Awareness of/Outreach to Kinship Family and Grandfamily Caregivers**

**Recommendation 1.1:** Increase public awareness and recognition of the unique strengths and needs of Kinship and Grandfamily caregivers and the importance of supporting them while they support the children in their care.

**Recommendation 1.2:** Improve outreach to Kinship Families and Grandfamilies to help them to identify their critical role as primary caregivers so they seek access to appropriate services and supports.

**Recommendation 1.3:** Increase Kinship Families and Grandfamilies' awareness of, and access to, the full range of available information, services, and supports to help them meet their needs and the needs of the children in their care.

## **Grandfamily and Kinship Caregiver Engagement**

**Recommendation 2.1:** Ensure Kinship and Grandfamily caregivers are recognized as an integral part of the child's care team, engaged in programs that are family centered and cognizant of the conflicting goals in care.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Increase the use of comprehensive assessments to determine caregiver and family strengths and needs when identifying appropriate services for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies who are seeking help.

**Recommendation 2.3:** Increase the inclusion of Kinship and Grandfamily caregivers and young people's voices in the planning of services by all relevant entities such as child welfare, aging, income support, and community-based organizations and service providers.

**Recommendation 2.4:** Increase the inclusion of the topic of Kinship Families and Grandfamilies in the education curricula and programs for healthcare, social workers, child welfare, legal, judicial, education, aging, disability, and related professions.

## **Services and Supports for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies**

**Recommendation 3.1:** Increase Kinship Families and Grandfamilies access to information, services, and supports.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Increase the availability of high quality, setting-appropriate and Kinship Family and Grandfamily-centered **respite** and childcare services.

**Recommendation 3.3:** Increase the availability and types of culturally competent, trauma informed **counseling, training, and education** for Kinship Families and Grandfamilies, including best practices, model approaches, and evidence-based interventions.

**Recommendation 3.4:** Increase the availability of supports and services that specifically meet the needs of the caregiver.

**Recommendation 3.5:** Expand the use of technology as a means of supporting Kinship Families and Grandfamilies.

**Recommendation 3.6:** Expand the use of volunteers and mentors and peer to peer supports as a means for supporting Kinship Families and Grandfamilies, including as a possible path to employment or career development.

**Recommendation 3.7:** Improve availability and access to free and or affordable quality legal and financial information, guidance, and services for Kinship families and Grandfamilies.

**Recommendation 3.8:** Improve child welfare system approaches to better prioritize and support the placement of children with relatives when they cannot remain their parents.

## **Financial and Workplace Security for Kinship and Grandfamily Caregivers**

**Recommendation 4.1:** Promote policies that prevent Kinship and Grandfamily caregivers from being financially disadvantaged by their caregiving responsibilities.

**Recommendation 4.2:** Advance the development and broad adoption of workplace policies, flexibilities, and practices that recognize Kinship Family and Grandfamily responsibilities as a fundamental part of each worker's life and support public-private partnerships that enable scalable solutions.

**Recommendation 4.3:** Increase the availability and use of tailored resources that Kinship Families and Grandfamilies can use to make informed financial decisions and plan for future financial needs.

**Recommendation 4.4:** Ensure that Kinship Families and Grandfamilies have the resources they need to engage in advance planning so that they may provide for children in the event of illness or incapacity.

## **Research, Data, and Evidence-Supported Practices**

**Recommendation 5.1:** Establish a national approach for obtaining, analyzing, and disseminating relevant data on Kinship Families and Grandfamilies.

**Recommendation 5.2:** Increase, support, and sustain research and development including adequate investments for evaluation of programs that support Kinship Families and Grandfamilies.

**Recommendation 5.3:** Increase the promotion, translation, and dissemination of promising practices, model approaches, evidence-informed and evidence based practices to support Kinship Families and Grandfamilies.