



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 662

PRINTERS NO. 764

PRIME SPONSOR: Pashinski

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2014/15	FY 2015/16
General Fund	\$0	See Fiscal Impact

SUMMARY: House Bill 662, Printer's Number 764, establishes the Kinship Caregiver Navigator Pilot Program in the Department of Human Services (DHS). This legislation is effective in 90 days.

ANALYSIS: This legislation requires DHS to institute a 12 month Kinship Caregiver Navigator Pilot Program, with at least one pilot program located in Northeast PA. DHS may work with other states that have similar programs for assistance in establishing a pilot program. DHS may also seek and receive input for the program from members of the family court judiciary, family law practitioners and family-child therapists and counselors.

DHS shall, at minimum:

- Create and maintain a Kinship Caregiver Navigator website that provides information on support and services available to kinship caregivers and those who are planning on becoming kinship caregivers, with special emphasis on kinship caregivers who are grandparents. The website information shall include:
 - Federal and state programs.
 - Support groups for kinship caregivers and children in the kinship caregiver's care.
 - Respite services for kinship caregivers.
 - Financial aid.
 - Relevant legal sources and available assistance.
 - Education and supportive therapy services for children.
 - Toll-free telephone number kinship caregivers can call to reach a kinship navigator.
 - A way for the public to provide input or suggestions.
- Work with the Area Agency on Aging and the county agency to track trends, concerns and other factors related to kinship caregivers and to identify areas of PA which are lacking in services and resources for kinship caregivers.
- Create and maintain a kinship caregiver hotline to provide supportive listening and guidance to kinship caregivers or those who are planning on becoming kinship caregivers. DHS may also create and maintain a live internet-based chat to provide guidance to kinship caregivers and those planning on becoming kinship caregivers.
- Designate and train individuals within DHS to serve as Kinship Caregiver Navigators.
- Educate the public on services and supports available to kinship caregivers with an emphasis on services to assist kinship caregivers who are grandparents. DHS may utilize

- websites or coordinate with other state and county agencies, area agencies on aging, schools, senior centers, community organizations and legislative offices in PA to assist in disseminating information.
- Communicate with area agencies on aging, county agencies, the Senate Aging and Youth Committee, and the House Aging and Older Adult Services and Children and Youth Committees for input on best practices in the design and function of program.
- Investigate the feasibility of an affirmative program which may include public-private partnerships similar to existing programs in other states that have kinship navigators.

This legislation specifies that Kinship Caregiver Navigators shall at a minimum, do the following:

- Assist kinship caregivers, through live internet-based chat on the website or by phone, to navigate the website to access relevant federal and state benefits, local community supports and services, and to answer questions regarding kinship care giving.
- Mediate with State agency staff or service providers and, when necessary, assist in establishing relationships between kinship caregivers and relevant federal and State agency staff.
- Work with a local area agency on aging and county agency to identify and provide outreach to kinship caregivers in need of additional services with special attention to grandparents, relatives not proficient in English or those in geographically isolated areas.
- Create a community-based support network for kinship caregivers by developing collaborative working relationships with groups and agencies, including community organizations, faith-based organizations, social agencies, and local community service providers.

The results of the pilot program must be reported by DHS to the General Assembly within three months of the end of the pilot. The report shall include: an assessment of the overall effectiveness of the program; recommendations about how to best serve kinship caregivers, with an emphasis on kinship caregivers who are grandparents; a comparison of the cost of placing a child in foster care with the cost of operating a Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program; and recommendations to establish a permanent Kinship Caregiver Navigator Program.

FISCAL IMPACT: The responsibilities outlined in this legislation for Kinship Caregiver Navigators make it unlikely that current DHS staff could absorb these responsibilities in addition to their current duties. The state of Washington has about half as many children in kinship care as Pennsylvania and utilizes 8.5 full-time equivalent staff to operate their Kinship Caregiver Navigator program. IF DHS requires 17 staff, the estimated costs could be approximately \$1,500,000 without factoring in the cost to build and maintain the website and the cost of the toll-free telephone hotline.

PREPARED BY: Ann Bertolino
House Appropriations Committee (R)

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Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.