

DHS Kinship Program



RI Works (RIW) Cash Benefit for Kinship Caregivers

Who are Kinship Caregivers?	Kinship caregivers are adult caregivers who are caring for someone else's minor child (under the age of 18) on a full-time basis. Caregivers can be grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings or other blood relatives, as well as non-relatives with legal custody such as guardianship.
Overview	The Kinship Program at DHS is a monthly cash assistance program to help kinship caregivers meet the needs of the child(ren) in their care. While this benefit will not cover all of the costs of raising a child, it can certainly help. Unlike the family cash assistance program, this program does not take the income of the caregiver into consideration, only the income of the child - which is typically zero.
Benefit Amounts <i>(as of 2025)</i>	Benefit amounts are determined on a per child basis: (currently \$510 per month for the first child). This amount then increases incrementally for each additional child.
Eligibility	Blood relatives (such as grandparents) are eligible with or without legal custody. For non-relative kinship caregivers, there must be a legal relationship such as guardianship. In both cases families who are already receiving a subsidy or stipend for the child are not eligible.
How to Apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Apply using the same application as used for other DHS benefits (such as SNAP) - check the RIW box● Applications can be downloaded from www.dhs.ri.gov on the Apply for Benefits page and then mailed in, dropped in any DHS drobox, or you can apply in person at one of the DHS offices (highly recommended)● Call 1-855-697-4347 to apply over the phone● Visit www.DHS.ri.org to apply directly online● Since this is a RIW cash assistance program, answer all items that have the RIW initials at the top of the section (<i>detailed instructions are on the application</i>)● You will receive a call from a DHS worker for an interview if you do not apply in person. The worker will let you know what supporting documents are needed. You will have ten days to submit the supporting documentation. If you are having trouble obtaining the requested documents let your DHS worker know.

FAQ's - Frequently Asked Questions

<i>How long does this payment last?</i>	As long as you remain the primary caregiver for your kinship child(ren) the payment will continue until the child reaches the age of 18.
<i>If my income will not be considered, why must I supply that information on the application?</i>	In order for DHS's system to process the application, income information must be provided. This also helps DHS staff to determine if there are any other benefits the family might be eligible for.
<i>How do I get guardianship if I currently have no legal status?</i>	Kinship caregivers without legal status should call the probate court in the town in which they live. The town will provide detailed information about the process as well as required forms and other documentation.
<i>When I apply for this benefit, how might it impact the biological parents?</i>	It is important to note that when applying for this benefit, the state will seek to receive child support from the child's parent(s). Before allowing this to have an effect on your decision to apply for this benefit, please have a conversation with us to explore outcomes or speak to your DHS worker.

The application process can be confusing, but...we can help!

<i>Who are we?</i>	The Village for RI Foster and Adoptive Families is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in March of 2016 as a peer-led support agency. The mission of The Village is to provide foster, adoptive, guardianship and kinship families in RI with the supports and resources needed to meet the needs of children and families effectively.
<i>Additional Resources</i>	Visit www.RIVillage.org for more information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Online and in person Support Groups in both English and Spanish● No cost family events for all foster, adoptive, and kinship families● Additional resources for Kinship Caregivers over the age of 55 - visit www.RIKinshipCommunityConnections.org for more information

Contact Info:

admin@rivillage.org

(401) 481-5483

or find us on Facebook!

