

Kinship Caregiver Payment Program

For the purpose of this program, kinship caregiver is a person to whom a child is related by blood, marriage, or adoption, or a person who has a significant, committed, positive relationship with the child and who is caring for a child in foster care.

The Iowa Department of Human Services' (DHS) Kinship Caregiver Program is a Family First Initiative inspired program, which aims to keep children in the safe care of kin and fictive kin.

The Kinship Caregiver Payment Program is a time-limited payment specifically for kinship caregivers. This is an automatic payment so kinship caregivers are not required to complete an application to receive this payment. A kinship caregiver will receive a monthly payment of \$300 for each child who is court ordered into their care. Payments are monthly and may start as soon as two months after the child is placed into the kinship caregiver's home and continue for up to six months.

During the first 60 days of kinship placement, kinship caregivers will receive assistance in applying for FIP (Family Investment Program) and Medicaid health care coverage for a child in their care. If a child is believed to have a disability, support and direction will be provided to connect with services or to apply for Social Security benefits. The FIP payment will end once the kinship caregiver payment begins.

After six months of receiving the kinship caregiver payment, this payment will end. In order for kinship caregivers to continue to receive financial support for the child who remains in care beyond the six months, DHS encourages kinship caregivers to consider becoming a licensed foster parent. The Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support (RRTS) contractor will reach out to kinship caregivers to offer an informational session during the first 60 days of a child's placement in their home. An in-person or virtual meeting is available at the convenience of the kinship caregiver.

If the kinship caregiver becomes an approved licensed foster parent, the kinship caregiver will begin to receive a foster care payment. The foster care payment is more than twice the kinship caregiver payment monthly rate. In addition, once the kinship caregiver becomes a licensed foster parent, any child placed by court order in their home will automatically be enrolled in the Medicaid program. If the kinship caregiver does not become licensed, a FIP application is advised in order to resume receiving caretaker FIP payments.