



OhioKAN

Florida: Kinship Navigator Program

Research Summary

Title of Program: Children's Home Network Kinship Supports Services (KIN-Tech, Florida)

Years it Operated: 2012-2015 (initial grant period); current

Number of families Served: 1,100 kinship caregivers served from 2012-2015.¹

Cost of Program: There is no current program cost information publicly available as of May 2019.

Funding Source: Initial federal funds were awarded through the Family Connections Grants: Child Welfare/TANF Collaboration.

Description of the Program: In 2019, Florida has not yet released current information about the KIN-Tech program. This summary is based upon a 2016 official report of the pilot program that operated from 2012 to 2015.

In 2012, the Children's Bureau granted seven three-year Family Connections grants to The Children's Home Network Inc. (CHI) in Tampa, FL and to six other Florida community partners for implementing a Kinship Navigator supports program.¹ CHI was tasked with implementing the Kinship Interdisciplinary Navigation Technologically Advanced Model (KIN-Tech). CHI serves two Florida counties, Hillsborough and Pinellas, where an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 children live in homes headed by grandparents and other non-parent relatives demonstrating significant need for kinship specific support services.¹

For the purposes of program evaluation during the initial grant period, kinship families referred to services were divided randomly and assigned to one of four options based upon a standardized decision-making tree: Usual Care, Standard Care, Enhanced KIN-Tech (Pinellas County only), and KIN-Tech Only (Hillsborough County).¹

Four main components comprise the initial KIN-Tech program:

1. A centralized intake number collects referrals for kinship support services from the public child welfare system, community based partners, and kinship caregivers themselves.
2. In Pinellas County, Enhanced Kin-Tech in partnership with the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) developed a new tool using the One-E App software. The new app supported kinship caregivers by providing them with a portal to state benefits which determined eligibility and enabled easy application for those benefits.

3. The KIN-Tech model utilized peers as kinship navigators instead of professional social workers. These peers are grandparents and other relatives hired by CHI to help navigate families through complex systems (for example, child welfare, TANF, and schools) and to aid families in linking to resources. Most meaningfully, these peer navigators share the lived experiences of the families.
4. An Interdisciplinary team of professionals from TANF, education, the legal community, social services, and healthcare operated as an interdisciplinary team to work with kinship families in Pinellas County. Specifically, they coordinated services and made decisions as a group regarding kinship families' cases.

Who benefits from the Program? Both informal and formal kinship families and their children in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, FL. In 2019, this program may have expanded to other Florida counties.

What services/benefits do they receive? During the initial program implementation and evaluation, Kinship families were assigned randomly to Usual Care, Standard Care, Enhanced Kin-Tech Care Services, and Kin-Tech Only program tracks. *Usual Care* targeted system involved kinship families where children had been placed with kin by the public child welfare system. These families received services from community based organizations contracted by child welfare. *Standard Care* targeted informal kinship families and utilized traditional kinship navigator services, including intensive case management and family support services through CHI. *Enhanced Kin-Tech Care* was operated in Pinellas County where families received intensive peer navigation services, utilized the One-E Application tool for state benefits, and had access to the interdisciplinary team at CHI. *Kin-Tech Only* operated Hillsborough County where families both formal and informal received only peer navigation to receive services and supports.

How did they receive the benefits/services? Families received services through case management, peer navigation, family support services, the One-E App, community based organizations, and an interdisciplinary team at CHI.

Where were the services provided? Kinship caregiver homes, community nonprofit organizations, child welfare offices, schools, CHI offices, and other various community locations.

Sources:

1. Site Visit Report: Kinship Interdisciplinary Navigation Technologically Advanced Model (KIN-Tech) April 2016 <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/flkinship.pdf>