Family Connection Grant Project
Abstract/Summary

Grantee Name: Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Grantee City and State: Oklahoma City, OK
Grant Project Title: Oklahoma Kinship Bridge
Family Connection Program Areas: Kinship Navigator and Family-finding

Summary of Grant Project

_ Oklahoma Kinship Bridge_ is a combined project and will utilize both Family-finding and Kinship Navigator aspects of this grant opportunity. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) is the project lead and will serve two children’s shelters, one in Oklahoma City and one in Tulsa, where it is anticipated that approximately 2,500 children will be served each project year. The project is designed to create innovative methods to expedite identification, recruitment, and retention of kinship resource families to assist in kinship placements.

The project should reduce the lengths of stay of children in foster care, the number of children in custody, the number of placements and moves of children in foster care, and the long-term, over-utilization of emergency shelters. Key external project partners include the National Resource Center for Youth Services, Oklahoma 2-1-1, and Oklahoma State University.

Current kinship families and youth will be involved in advising the planning and implementation of the project. The approach and strategy includes implementing an intensive family-finding methodology during the first 24 hours of a child being brought to one of the two metro-area emergency shelters. Family-finders will perform an immediate response search process with both parents and child to identify relatives for placement and/or sources of support (in/out of state). Kinship Navigators, with the help of project partners, will assist kinship caregivers in learning about, finding, and using programs and services available to support this placement for the child.

The long-term outcomes for the project will 1) allow families to have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs, 2) include consistent child and family involvement in case planning, 3) allow for reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives, and 4) increase the permanency and stability for children in their kinship placement arrangements.

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