

Kinship Bridge grant

Oklahoma Kinship Bridge is a combined grant demonstration project which implements both Family-finding and Kinship Navigator programs. The \$3 million grant award is from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Children's Bureau and is for a three year period of time. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) is the project lead and serves 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 placement moves of children in foster care, and the long-term, over-utilization of emergency shelters. The approach and strategy includes implementing an intensive family-finding methodology during the first 24 hours of a child entering one of the two metro-area emergency shelters. Family-finders 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 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. For more information, please contact the Project Manager, Karen A. Poteet at (405) 522-2467 or karen.poteet@okdhs.org