



## Rhode Island Department of Human Services

# Rhode Island Works Kinship Program

### What is the Kinship Program?

The Kinship Program within Rhode Island Works refers to an RI Works eligibility status for family caregivers. The Kinship Program may extend RI Works benefits to any family member in which the adult has a blood or legal relationship with a minor for which they are the caretaker and not the parent. Through this program, children are able to maintain family and cultural ties with the support of kinship caregivers that promote the emotional and mental wellbeing of the child. Often, these caregivers are grandparents, relatives, family friends, or individuals who have previously provided care to the child, such as teachers or coaches, who may now be providing full-time support.

### Why should I apply for this program?

Kinship care helps children by providing a strong foundation for their emotional and social wellbeing that is more seamless, and less disruptive to the child. The Kinship Program offers eligible caregivers financial support to care for a child they know. Children raised by caretakers they previously had a relationship with usually see improved outcomes long after they become independent adults.

### Am I eligible?

Eligibility for the Kinship Program is based on the following criteria:

Citizenship	Relationship to child	Residency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adults must be a citizen or qualified non-citizen if applying for assistance for themselves.</li><li>If applying for the child only, the child must be a citizen or qualified non-citizen. <i>Citizenship for the adult is not considered</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Must be a blood or legal relationship, but not the parent (for example grandparent, sibling, aunt, cousin, legal guardian, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>If the blood/legal relationship requirement is not met, but the child is still being cared for by someone other than the parents then the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) may be able to help obtain legal guardianship.</i></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The applicant must be a Rhode Island resident, but there are no length of time requirements.</li></ul>

## How do I apply?

Applications can be submitted via the Customer Portal (HealthyRhode.ri.gov), put in any of DHS's secure drop boxes, or submitted in person at any regional office. Paper applications (DHS-2) can be obtained at regional offices and are also available online at dhs.ri.gov on the apply now page.

## Anything else I should know?

When applying, a family can apply for RI Works for both the adult and child(ren), or for the child(ren) only. Income information will be needed for anyone applying, but it will only be counted if the application includes the adult on the case. The Kinship Program provides cash assistance that is counted as income towards other programs. The application process is the same for anyone seeking RI Works benefits.

Please call the Village for more information or assistance.

The Village for RI Foster and Adoptive Families is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to serving foster, adoptive and kinship families in Rhode Island. The Village provides peer support, support groups, family events and trainings, as well as advocacy.



**The Village**  
For RI Foster & Adoptive Families

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[www.rikinshipcommunityconnections.org](http://www.rikinshipcommunityconnections.org) [[rikinshipcommunityconnections.org](http://rikinshipcommunityconnections.org)]

Facebook: RI Kinship Community Connections

Facebook: The Village for RI Foster and Adoptive Families

**(401) 481-5483** Office

### Have More Questions?

Visit our website: [www.dhs.ri.gov](http://www.dhs.ri.gov)

Call: 1-855-MY-RIDHS (1-855-697-4347) Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, except holidays, from 8:30AM-3:00PM

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Customer Service: 1-888-979-9939 Last updated 10.2024