

**ACF Region IX
State and Territorial
TANF Strategic Session**



**Child Welfare
and TANF**

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ACF Region IX State and Territorial TANF Strategic Session

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Child Welfare and TANF

TANF Kinship and Family Empowerment Services

Contact: *Rebecca Jacobs*

Administrator of Office of Family Support

El Paso County

Colorado

Phone: 719-444-8191

Email: rebeccajacobs@elpasoco.com

Web Site: <http://dhs.elpasoco.com/>

The kinship program began as a desire to help grandparents who are serving as the primary caregiver for their grandchildren. The Kinship Unit is a blended unit, meaning that are eligibility workers and social workers working in collaboration to serve the child-only TANF cases in El Paso County. Currently the unit is beginning to offer employment services to relative caregivers if they are interested and a relative caregiver support group is in place.

The child-only caseload in El Paso County normally fluctuates between 500 and 550 cases. All child only cases are covered by the Kinship Unit. The unit is comprised of four eligibility technicians, one caseworker and one advocate. The eligibility technicians work with relative caregivers in securing all eligible benefits while the caseworker provides case management services to the families. The advocate acts primarily assists families navigate the court system. In addition, the unit has developed partnerships in which other services have become co-located. These services include domestic violence, child care, and mental health.

The Achieving Independence Center

Contact: *Evelyn Busby*

Executive Director

Achieving Independence Center

1601 Cherry Street, 9th Floor,

Philadelphia PA 19106

Phone: 215-574-9194 ext. 203

Email: ebusby@aicenter.us

Web Site: http://dhs.phila.gov/intranet/pgintrahome_pub.nsf/Content/Adoption+-+AIC

The Achieving Independence Center (AIC) is a collaborative effort in Philadelphia to support youth transitioning out of foster care in their journey towards self sufficiency. It is designed as a “one stop” for youth and provides services around life skills, educational support, employment and training, housing assistance, computer literacy, mentoring, and connecting youth to other resources. The AIC uses a membership model in which youth become members of the Center for as long as they are eligible and may select the services they wish to receive. The center is a project of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC) and is also supported by the city’s TANF agency, the Department of Public Welfare. The center is administered and coordinated by Arbor Employment and Training, LLC, a welfare and workforce

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contractor. The Philadelphia Youth Network provides job training and placements through the Center and subsidized employment is provided through partnerships with Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey and Quaker City.

First Steps

Contact: *Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)*
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS)
Bureau of Child Development Services (BCDS)
402 West Washington Street, Room W. 364
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739
Phone: 317-233-6092
Email: FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov
Web Site: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2633.htm>

First Steps is funded with TANF funds and provides early intervention services to disabled and developmentally vulnerable infants and young children. The program coordinates locally available education, health, and social services so that at-risk families have access to a wide array of services. Families who are eligible to participate in Indiana's First Steps System include children ages birth to three years who are experiencing developmental delays and/or have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

Kids N Kin

Contact: *Brenda Rich*
Turning Points for Children
415 South Fifteenth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
Phone: 215-875-4955
Email: brich@turningpointsforchildren.org
Web Site: http://www.turningpointsforchildren.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=3

Kids N Kin seeks to nurture families with children who are struggling against difficult economic and environmental odds. The program provides direct in-home services to relative caregivers. Kids N Kin is operated through a contract with the Philadelphia Department of Human Service (DHS) to provide support services to relative caregivers in the city. The program receives referrals from DHS and assigns caseworkers to each new case within 24 hours. Within one week the case worker visits the family in their home and begins in-home services. Within the program, many of the families are hesitant to claim TANF benefits they are entitled to in caring for a child. Staff works with the family to educate them about their eligibility for child-only supports. If the caregiver decides to apply for TANF benefits, the program will write a letter verifying that the person is a kinship care provider and request the TANF office to assist the family in receiving all eligible benefits.

The Linkages Project

Contact: *Danna Fabella*
Linkages Project Director
925 L Street, Suite 350
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 925-324-5258
Email: danna.fabella@cfpic.org
Web Site: http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm

The CalWORKs/Child Welfare Partnership Project, known as Linkages, began in November 2000 to coordinate services between Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs (TANF) as a way to improve service delivery for low-income families. The project was developed and directed by the California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF). The first stage included a statewide county survey about coordination practices, followed by the

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development of recommendations about how to coordinate child welfare and public assistance programs in California. The second stage provided two-year grants to 13 counties to implement coordinated child welfare/welfare services. In 2006, the Administration on Children and Families awarded a five-year Federal grant to the State of California Department of Children's Services for the continuation of the Linkage project to enhance, expand, and evaluate Linkages in the existing counties and bring additional counties into the initiative. There are currently 33 counties participating in the Linkage Project. A formal statewide evaluation is being conducted by Harder and Company.