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H.B. 14
133rd General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Reported by House Finance

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Boyd and Baldrige

Niyah Walters, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Requires, rather than permits as is the case under current law, the Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to establish a statewide kinship care navigator program.
- Expands the definition of “kinship caregiver” to include any nonrelative adult that has a familiar and long-standing relationship or bond with the child or the family, which relationship or bond will ensure the child’s social ties.
- Requires the Director of ODJFS to divide the state into as few as five, or as many as 12, regions for the kinship care navigator program, based upon the population, number of kinship caregivers, expertise of navigators, and any other relevant factor.
- Requires the program in each kinship care navigator region to provide information and referral services and assistance in obtaining support services for kinship caregivers within its region.
- Specifies that the program receive funding through the General Revenue Fund to the extent that the funds are appropriated and requires the Director to take any action necessary to obtain federal funds available for the program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.
- Requires ODJFS to pay the full nonfederal share for the program and provides that county departments of job and family services and public children services agencies are not responsible for the cost of the program.
- Requires the Director to adopt rules to implement the kinship care navigator program not later than one year after the bill’s effective date.
- Repeals the current statutory requirement that ODJFS make payments, with available funds, to public children services agencies (PCSAs) to provide kinship care navigator information and referral services and assistance obtaining support services to kinship caregivers pursuant to the kinship care navigator program.

- Eliminates the current statutory option for ODJFS to provide training and technical assistance concerning the needs of kinship caregivers to (1) PCSA employees and (2) persons or entities that serve kinship caregivers or perform kinship care navigator duties under contract with a PCSA.
- Makes an appropriation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Mandatory kinship navigator program

The bill *requires* the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to establish a statewide kinship care navigator program. Currently, ODJFS may establish a statewide program of kinship care navigators but is not required to do so. Under continuing law, the purpose of the program is to assist kinship caregivers who are seeking information regarding, or assistance obtaining, services and benefits available at the state and local level that address the needs of those caregivers residing in each county.¹

The bill expands the definition of “kinship caregiver” to include any nonrelative adult that has a familiar and long-standing relationship or bond with the child or the family, which relationship or bond will ensure the child’s social ties. Under continuing law, a “kinship caregiver” is defined as any of the following adults caring for a child in place of the parents: grandparents (up to “great-great-great”), siblings, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces (up to “great-grand”), first cousins and first cousins once removed, stepparents and stepsiblings, spouses and former spouses of the above individuals, a legal guardian of the child, or a legal custodian of the child.²

Regions

The bill requires the Director of ODJFS to divide the state into regions for the kinship care navigator program. There may be as few as five, but not more than 12, regions. In establishing the regions, the Director must take the following into consideration:

- The population size;
- The estimated number of kinship caregivers;
- The expertise of kinship navigators;
- Any other factor the Director considers relevant.³

¹ R.C. 5101.851.

² R.C. 5101.85.

³ R.C. 5101.853.

Services provided

The bill requires the program in each kinship care navigator region to provide information and referral services and assistance in obtaining support services for kinship caregivers within its region.⁴ Under continuing law, the program provides information and referral services and assistance obtaining support services including the following:

- Publicly funded child care;
- Respite care;
- Training related to caring for special needs children;
- A toll-free telephone number that may be called to obtain basic information about the rights of, and services available to, kinship caregivers;
- Legal services.⁵

Funding

The bill requires the Director to take any action necessary to obtain federal funds available for the program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.⁶ Title IV-E funds provide for payments to states for kinship guardian assistance, among other things.⁷

The bill also specifies that the program is to be funded to the extent that the General Assembly appropriates General Revenue Funds for the program.⁸

No local share

The bill requires ODJFS to pay the full nonfederal share for the kinship care navigator program. No county department of job and family services or public children services agency is responsible for the program's cost.⁹

Rules

The bill requires ODJFS to adopt rules to implement the kinship care navigator program not later than one year after the bill's effective date.¹⁰

⁴ R.C. 5101.854.

⁵ R.C. 5101.851.

⁶ R.C. 5101.856(A)(2).

⁷ 42 U.S.C. 670, not in the bill.

⁸ R.C. 5101.856(A)(1).

⁹ R.C. 5101.856(B).

¹⁰ R.C. 5101.855.

Repeal of kinship caregiver payment/assistance law

The bill repeals the current statutory requirement that ODJFS make payments, with available funds, to public children services agencies (PCSAs) for the purpose of permitting PCSAs to provide kinship care navigator information and referral services and assistance obtaining support services to kinship caregivers pursuant to the kinship care navigator program. Additionally, the bill repeals the option for ODJFS to provide training and technical assistance concerning the needs of kinship caregivers to PCSA employees and to persons or entities that serve kinship caregivers or perform the duties of a kinship care navigator and are under contract with an agency.¹¹

Appropriation

The bill appropriates \$5,000,000 in each fiscal year 2020 and 2021 from the GRF to support the Kinship Care Navigator Program.¹²

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-13-19
Reported, H. Health	06-05-19
Re-referred to H. Finance	06-05-19
Reported, H. Finance	06-11-19

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¹¹ R.C. 5101.852, repealed under Section 3 of the bill.

¹² Sections 4 and 5.