

# A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR RELATIVES RAISING D.C. CHILDREN:

Helping You Find the Best Path Forward



*Free Legal Helpline: 202-505-5803*



Supporting Kin And The Children They Raise

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

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# Part I: About This Guide

## A. Who is This Guide for?

This Guide provides information to relative caregivers and parents when it becomes necessary for a **relative caregiver** to care for a **D.C. child**.

A **relative caregiver** is someone related to a child (by blood, marriage, or adoption) or a close family friend who is taking care of a child when the child's parents cannot care for them. Examples of relative caregivers are grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts, great-uncles, and godparents.

A **D.C. child** is a child whose "home state" is D.C. D.C. will generally be the home state of a child who has lived in D.C. for at least six months. (See **Section II.C.2.** of this Guide for more definitions of "home state").

The information in the Guide **will be most helpful** to relative caregivers who live in D.C. and are caring for a D.C. child. It may still be helpful to:

- ▶ Relative caregivers who live in D.C. and are caring for a child who came from another state; or
- ▶ Relative caregivers who do not live in D.C. and are caring for a child who came from D.C.

*(It may be complicated to figure out what state law and financial benefits apply in these situations. You can ask for help from the Family Court Self-Help Center located on the JM level of the D.C. Superior Court or contact a local legal services organization or family law attorney for more information (see **Appendix D**)).*

## **B. What Information Does This Guide Provide?**

This Guide provides information about the legal options a relative caregiver and parent should consider when it becomes necessary for a relative caregiver to help care for a child during difficult times. It also explains the financial resources that may be available for each option. The information in this Guide is current as of 2022.

The pros and cons of each option are discussed to help figure out the best choice. It might be hard to decide which option is best. This Guide provides information about where to get help with this decision. Many organizations are available to help.

## **C. What are Some Examples of a Relative Caregiver Caring for a D.C. Child?**

Below are some situations when a relative caregiver may need to care for a D.C. child:

- ▶ Camille has been the primary caregiver for her six-year old son Raymond. The D.C. Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA”) has become involved because Camille has a substance use problem that resulted in her not being able to properly care for Raymond. CFSA, Camille, and Camille’s mother, Linda, have agreed that Linda will care for Raymond while Camille goes to rehab. Linda is a relative caregiver to Raymond.

- ▶ Dana gave birth to Carla while she was still in high school. Dana and her mother, Gwendolyn, agree that it would be better if they share responsibility for taking care of Carla until Dana graduates from high school and can find a job. Gwendolyn is a relative caregiver to Carla.
- ▶ Jerome has been the primary caregiver for his two-year-old son Isaiah. Isaiah's mother comes by to see him when she can, but she is homeless and cannot care for Isaiah. Jerome was recently arrested and is now in D.C. Jail. Jerome asks his mother, Jada, to take care of Isaiah while he is in jail. Jada is a relative caregiver to Isaiah.
- ▶ Louise has kidney disease and is on the waiting list for a kidney transplant. If she does not get the transplant soon, her doctors say she will become very sick and only have a few months to live. Louise asks her sister, Sherry, to care for her four-year-old daughter, Kendal, if she does not get the transplant. In that case, Sherry would become a relative caregiver to Kendal.
- ▶ Maria is from El Salvador and has a deportation order. Her 10-year-old son, Christopher, was born here and is a United States citizen. Maria wants to make sure her son can stay in this country if she is ever deported. Maria asks her brother, Angelo, who is a green card holder to care of Christopher if she is deported. Angelo would become a relative caregiver for Christopher if Maria is deported.

# Part II: Relative Caregiver Options to Care for a D.C. Child

## A. Informal Custody

### 1. What is Informal Custody?

Informal custody happens when a relative caregiver cares for a child with no court order or formal legal agreement between the relative caregiver and the parent(s).

### 2. Who Can Get Informal Custody?

Anyone can get informal custody—you must simply be willing to care for a child when his or her parent(s) cannot.

### 3. How to Get Informal Custody?

There is no specific process for getting informal custody, and it can happen in a number of ways. Some examples include a parent asking a relative to take the child for a period of time while he or she is unable to provide care, or a parent dropping the child off with a relative and not returning. CFSA also may ask a relative to take the child informally because CFSA decided it is not safe for the child to remain with the parent(s). Anyone who takes informal custody of a child should try to make sure the parent has agreed, and if possible, get that agreement in writing in case there are any questions later.

### 4. What are the Pros and Cons of Informal Custody?

The pros of informal custody are that it is a quick and easy way to protect a child. For example, if a child is in immediate danger or has nowhere else to go, taking informal custody may be the only option until you can find help for the child or try to get another form of custody. Informal custody also does not require a court order or involve other people in the child's life.

However, informal custody is risky because it provides no legal rights for the relative caregiver to take care of the child, like getting medical care for the child, except in an emergency. A relative caregiver with informal custody also may have trouble registering the child for school (including getting required immunizations), getting certain governmental benefits (see **Part III** of this Guide), adding the child to his or her lease, obtaining a housing voucher, or applying for a larger public/subsidized housing unit. And, if the relative caregiver does not have the child's birth certificate or Medicaid card, they may need a court order to obtain those. Also, the parent(s) can take the child back at any time, even if they agreed that the child should stay with the relative caregiver or the relative caregiver thinks it would be unsafe for the child to return home. For all these reasons, informal custody is not usually a good custody solution.

**NOTE: You can sign an OSSE Other Primary Caregiver form to enroll the child in school (see form on p. 61).**

## **5. Who to Contact for More Information?**

For more information about informal custody, contact a local legal services provider or family law attorney (see **Appendix D**).

## **B. Custodial Power of Attorney**

### **1. What is a Custodial Power of Attorney?**

A Custodial Power of Attorney is a written agreement between the parent(s) and relative caregiver that generally grants temporary and limited custody of a child, which can include the following rights and responsibilities:

- ▶ Physical custody of the child;
- ▶ Responsibility for the child's care;
- ▶ The right to enroll the child in school, get information from the school, and make decisions about school-related matters; and
- ▶ The right to get medical care for the child, as well as get information and make decisions about the child's medical care.

## **2. Who Can Get a Custodial Power of Attorney?**

Anyone can get a Custodial Power of Attorney if the child's parent(s) agree to sign one. The parent(s) get to decide what rights they want to give and for how long. The parent(s) may want to do this if they need someone to care for the child temporarily, but do not want to have to go to court to make the arrangement legally valid. The parent(s) can revoke the Custodial Power of Attorney at any time.

## **3. How to Get a Custodial Power of Attorney?**

We recommend using the sample Custodial Power of Attorney at the end of this Guide, or getting a copy at the Family Court Self-Help Center or online at: [\*\*dckincare.org/forms\*\*](http://dckincare.org/forms). Parent(s) can also write and sign their own agreement, but it should include the following information:

- ▶ The rights and responsibilities granted with respect to the child;
- ▶ The length of time the Custodial Power of Attorney will be in place (this can be for any length of time or indefinitely until revoked);



- ▶ How the parent can revoke the Custodial Power of Attorney;
- ▶ Any other important information about the care of the child; and
- ▶ The parent(s) signature showing their agreement.

The Custodial Power of Attorney does not need to be notarized, but it is recommended. It is also **not** filed with any court.

#### 4. What are the Pros and Cons of a Custodial Power of Attorney?

One advantage of a Custodial Power of Attorney is that it is a legally valid document that gives a relative caregiver the authority to care for the child, which can include getting important services for the child like medical care. It also may be accepted as proof the child is living with the relative for adding the child to a lease or applying for a larger public/subsidized housing unit. Having a legally valid, written document can be helpful if there is ever any question about who should be caring for the child. Another advantage of a Custodial Power of Attorney is that it can be simple to create, there is no court involvement, and it can be changed or revoked at any time.

A possible downside of a Custodial Power of Attorney is that some providers of services and benefits may not accept a Custodial Power of Attorney and will require a court custody order (see **Part III** of this Guide).

A Custodial Power of Attorney also does not provide long-term safety and stability for the child since it can be revoked at any time.

## **5. Who to Contact for More Information?**

Go to the Family Court Self-Help Center located at the JM level of the D.C. Superior Court or contact a local legal services organization or family law attorney for more information (see **Appendix D**).

## **C. Custody Ordered by a Court**

### **1. What is Custody Ordered by a Court?**

Physical and legal custody ordered by a court grants important rights with respect to caring for a child. Physical custody means where the child lives. Legal custody means who can make decisions for the child and get records and information about the child. Sole custody generally grants a relative caregiver the same rights as a parent. Sole physical custody of a child means that the child lives only with the relative caregiver. Sole legal custody means only the relative caregiver has the right to get school and medical records, talk to doctors and teachers, and make decisions about the child. Joint physical and/or legal custody means the parent and relative caregiver share physical and/or legal custody, but it does not have to be equal. The court can grant any combination of sole or joint custody. For example, the court can grant: (a) sole legal and physical custody of the child to the relative caregiver, (b) sole physical custody of the child to the relative caregiver but joint legal custody to both the relative caregiver and parent(s), or (c) joint physical and legal custody to the relative caregiver and parent(s).

### **2. Who Can Request Custody From a D.C. Court?**

Generally, a custody case can be filed in D.C. if it is the “home state” of the child. “Home state” means that the child or

children lived in D.C. with a parent or person acting as a parent for at least six months in a row right before filing the case. If the child is less than six months old, D.C. is the home state if the child lived here since birth. D.C. is also the home state if the child now lives in a different state, but (a) the child has lived there for less than six months, (b) the child lived in D.C. for six months in a row before the child moved away, and (c) a parent still lives in D.C. If D.C. is not the child's home state, you may still be able to file for custody in D.C. but check with the Family Court Self-Help Center or a lawyer for assistance.

A relative caregiver may file for custody of the child in D.C. court if one of the following three things is true:

- ▶ The parent who was caring for the child the most during the past three years agrees to the relative caregiver filing for custody;
- ▶ The relative caregiver has been living with and caring for the child for four of the most recent six months; or
- ▶ The child is currently living with the relative caregiver, and custody with the relative caregiver will prevent harm to the child.

The court will start with the idea that it is always best for a child to live with their parent(s) UNLESS it can be shown that:

- ▶ The parent(s) agree to the relative caregiver having custody;
- ▶ The parent(s) have abandoned the child or cannot or will not take care of the child; or
- ▶ Staying with the parent(s) will hurt the child physically or emotionally.

Even if these things are proved, the judge will only grant custody to a relative caregiver if it is determined it would be best for the child. The judge will consider the following:

- ▶ How the child gets along with the relative caregiver, parents, and siblings;
- ▶ Who has been caring for the child;
- ▶ What custody decision will be best for the child's physical and emotional needs; and
- ▶ The wishes of the child.

### **3. How to Request Custody From a Court?**

A complaint or motion for custody can be filed at the Family Court Central Intake Center located on the JM level of the D.C. Superior Court, 500 Indiana Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Form complaints and motions and help with filling them out are available at the Family Court Self-Help Center, located in Room JM-570 of the D.C. Superior Court, or online at [dccourts.gov/services/forms](https://dccourts.gov/services/forms). The Center is open every weekday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, with no new intakes accepted after 4:30 pm.

### **4. What are the Pros and Cons of Custody Ordered by a Court?**

Custody ordered by a court can provide greater rights than other options discussed in this Guide because: (a) it grants the right to care for the child and make decisions about the child; and (b) the order is legally enforceable, which means everyone must follow what the order says about who has the right to care for and make decisions about the child. Legal custody permits the relative caregiver to get medical care for the child, obtain the child's medical records, and talk with medical

professionals about the child's care. There are also certain public benefits that are only available to a relative caregiver who has legal and/or physical custody ordered by a court (or by a Custodial Power of Attorney) (see **Part III** of this Guide). Also, unless the parent gets the court to change the order, he or she cannot simply come pick up the child, so this provides safety and stability for the child.

The possible downsides of custody ordered by a court are that you have to go to court to get an order, and there may be a number of hearings or a trial before custody is granted. If the parent(s) do not agree to the custody arrangement, a court proceeding may result in bad feelings between the parties. In addition, until the child turns 18, a parent can ask the court to change the order. Finally, even if everyone agrees together to change the court-ordered custody arrangement, the change would not be legal unless the court orders it.

## 5. Who to Contact for More Information?

Go to the Family Court Self-Help Center to get sample legal forms for filing custody and help with completing them, or go online for copies of these forms at [\*\*dccourts.gov/services/forms\*\*](https://dccourts.gov/services/forms). More information is also available at [\*\*lawhelp.org/dc/resource/pro-se-family-law-pleadings-for-individuals-w\*\*](https://lawhelp.org/dc/resource/pro-se-family-law-pleadings-for-individuals-w) and from the Handbook for People Who Represent Themselves in Divorce, Custody, and Child Support Cases at [\*\*lawhelp.org/files/7C92C43F-9283-A7E0-5931-E57134E903FB/attachments/B59386E1-BCFD-4AE8-99A6-8C4F08342AAD/dr-handbook-for-self-represented-parties.pdf\*\*](https://lawhelp.org/files/7C92C43F-9283-A7E0-5931-E57134E903FB/attachments/B59386E1-BCFD-4AE8-99A6-8C4F08342AAD/dr-handbook-for-self-represented-parties.pdf). Call the D.C. Bar Legal Information Helpline at (202) 626-3499 to listen to prerecorded messages about custody issues, or contact a local legal services organization or family law attorney for help (see **Appendix D**).

## D. Foster Care

### 1. What is Foster Care?

If CFSA finds that a child has been abused or neglected or is in immediate danger of abuse or neglect, it may take the child out of his or her birth family home and place the child in a safe setting, which is called foster care. Children in foster care may be placed with foster parents, in group homes, or in other safe places identified by CFSA. CFSA is responsible for the child when in foster care.

Abuse includes the following four categories:

- ▶ Putting a child in a dangerous situation;
- ▶ Hurting a child on purpose;
- ▶ Sexual exploitation or contact with a child; or
- ▶ Mental or emotional harm to a child.

Neglect means not giving a child enough food, shelter, supervision, education, or medical care. By itself, lack of money is not child neglect.

Anyone who thinks a child has been abused or neglected can call CFSA's 24-hour hotline at (202) 671-SAFE and the caller's identity will be kept confidential. If CFSA decides to remove a child from a home due to abuse or neglect, the agency will file an action in the D.C. Family Court within 72 hours to get approval of the decision. If approved, the child will be placed in a foster home, which may be the home of a relative caregiver if the relative caregiver has or receives a foster parent license, as discussed below.

Most foster care arrangements are temporary, as the child is normally reunified with his or her parent(s). A court case is opened for the child called a neglect case, and the judge will determine whether or not it is safe for the child to go back home, or if it is not safe, then the court may consider adoption or guardianship of the foster child.

## 2. Who Can Become a Foster Parent?

To become a foster parent for a D.C. child, a person must generally meet the licensing requirements set forth below **(Note: A relative caregiver who lives in D.C. may ask CFSA to waive any of these requirements that do not affect the child's safety):**

- ▶ Be at least 21 years old;
- ▶ Live in D.C. or Maryland;
- ▶ Provide character references;
- ▶ Be able to support the household financially;
- ▶ Have enough space in the home or apartment for the child to sleep separately from adults and from opposite-sex children over the age of five;
- ▶ Have the time and ability to provide good care, guidance, and support to the child;
- ▶ Be in good physical and mental health and free of contagious diseases (this applies to all people living in the home); and
- ▶ Ensure the home meets certain other health, safety, and sanitary requirements.

In addition, neither the foster parent nor anyone 18 or older living in the home can:

- ▶ Be identified as a child abuser/neglecter in a neglect case; or
- ▶ Have a felony conviction for certain offenses, including domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

### **3. How to Become a Foster Parent?**

If CFSA believes the child is not safe to remain in his or her home, CFSA may ask a relative caregiver to care for the child. CFSA can grant a relative caregiver who lives in D.C. a temporary foster parent license, which allows the relative caregiver to take custody of the child right away. The temporary license lasts for 150 days, with the possibility of one renewal for an additional 90 days, while awaiting approval of a permanent annual license. CFSA may ask the relative caregiver to take care of the child informally rather than become a foster parent, or tell the relative caregiver to file for custody in court instead.

### **4. What are the Pros and Cons of Becoming a Foster Parent?**

Becoming a foster parent can have many advantages. First, similar to sole custody, a relative caregiver will have a legal order from a court that grants the right to care for the child. The child's parent(s) cannot come get the child at any time, and they must meet certain requirements before they can be reunified with the child. This allows the child to live in a safe and stable home while the parent(s) try to fix the issues in their home so the child can be safely returned. CFSA has ultimate responsibility for children in foster care, but foster parents have certain rights regarding the child, like the right to get health care and education for the child. Another advantage



of becoming a foster parent is CFSA pays the foster parent a set monthly amount to help care for the child (called a foster care subsidy), which helps pay for the child's food, home, clothing, and other needs (See **Section III.K.** of this Guide for information on the foster care subsidy). Foster parents also have priority consideration if a foster child becomes available for adoption or guardianship.

There are also possible downsides to being a foster parent. First, it takes a lot of time and energy. There are court hearings every few months, and a social worker from CFSA will stay involved with the child and make regular visits to the foster parent home. The foster parent license must be renewed each year and the home must continue to meet all of the applicable licensing requirements. Second, CFSA and the court may require the foster parent or the child to do things that the foster parent may not agree with, like allowing the child visitation with the parent(s) or returning the child to live with the parent(s). In addition, even if the foster parent and the biological parent(s) believe the child is safe to return home, this cannot happen unless the court agrees.

## **5. Who to Contact for More Information?**

CFSA can provide information about the foster care process and answer questions about becoming a foster parent, or go online at [fosterdckids.org](http://fosterdckids.org) to get answers to questions. The D.C. Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center is also a good resource for foster parents (see **Appendix C**). The D.C. Family Court Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect can provide information and lawyers for foster parents.

## **E. Permanent Guardianship**

### **1. What is Permanent Guardianship?**

Similar to foster care, permanent guardianship is for children who have been taken out of their family homes because CFSA has found that they have been abused or neglected or are in immediate danger of abuse or neglect. Permanent guardianship is different from foster care because it is supposed to be a permanent option for children and CFSA does not stay involved with the family. Permanent guardianship grants a caregiver long-term physical and legal custody of the child. Parents still have certain rights, like agreeing to the child's adoption and determining the child's religion, and they may be granted visitation with the child.

### **2. Who Can Become a Permanent Guardian?**

A relative caregiver may become a permanent guardian for a child who has been taken out of their home by CFSA. Usually the proposed permanent guardian is a relative or close family friend, or someone currently caring for the child, who has been licensed as a foster parent.

### **3. How to Become a Permanent Guardian?**

A relative caregiver may file a motion for permanent guardianship any time after the neglect case is filed. The motion must include information about the child, the proposed guardian, and the parents, and why permanent guardianship, rather than adoption or return to the parent, is in the child's best interests. The court can only grant permanent guardianship to someone the child has been living with for a least six months. The court must look at several factors to determine that it is in the best

interests of the child, that adoption or return to the parent is not right for the child, and that the proposed permanent guardian can provide a safe and permanent home for the child.

#### **4. What are the Pros and Cons of Becoming a Permanent Guardian?**

Becoming a permanent guardian can have many advantages. First, similar to sole custody, a relative caregiver will have a legal order from a court that grants the right to care for and make decisions about the child. And, once the permanent guardianship is granted, the neglect case is closed and CFSA is no longer involved with the family. Permanent guardians licensed as foster parents can also receive a guardianship subsidy to help care for the child. (See **Section III.L** of this Guide for information on the permanent guardianship subsidy). It is also a good option when the relative caregiver does not want to adopt the child and end the parent's rights altogether.

There are also possible downsides to being a permanent guardian. First, the relative caregiver will need to go to court to be granted permanent guardianship of the child. In addition, the guardianship order can be changed or ended if a parent files a motion and the judge determines that there has been a major change in circumstances and it is best for the child.

#### **5. Who to Contact for More Information?**

CFSA can provide information about the guardianship process and answer questions about becoming a permanent guardian. The D.C. Family Court Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect can provide information and lawyers to proposed permanent guardians.

## **F. Standby Guardianship**

### **1. What is Standby Guardianship?**

Under D.C. law, a custodial parent (which for this purpose means a custodial parent or other person who has physical custody and legal rights to the child ordered by a court) can authorize a third party (a person other than a parent) to take care of and make decisions for the child if the parent becomes incapable of doing so due to death, illness, or an adverse immigration action such as detention or deportation (a “triggering event”). In other words, the parent can name a standby guardian to care for the child in case he or she is unable to do so in the future. Until that time comes, the parent will continue to care for the child and keep all of his or her rights to raise the child and make decisions for the child’s care.

### **2. Who Can Become a Standby Guardian?**

Anyone can become a standby guardian if the custodial parent names that person in writing as the standby guardian, and the court approves the appointment of the standby guardian by determining it is in the best interests of the child.

### **3. How to Become a Standby Guardian?**

A custodial parent can name someone as the standby guardian, usually a relative or trusted friend, in a written document called a “designation.” The designation does not have to be filed with the court initially, but it must be signed by the custodial parent, the proposed standby guardian, and two witnesses. The standby guardian’s responsibility to care for the child starts when there is a “triggering event,” which means: (a) the parent states in writing that he or she cannot currently care for the child

and agrees for the standby guardian to do so; (b) the parent is determined incapable to care for the child by a health care provider; (c) the parent dies; or (d) the parent is subject to an adverse immigration action, such as detention or deportation. Within 90 days after the triggering event, the parent or standby guardian must file a petition with the court to approve the standby guardian, or the guardianship will automatically terminate. The petition must be served on anyone with legal rights to the child. The court will then determine whether it is in the best interests of the child to approve the appointment of the standby guardian and grant custody of the child.

#### **4. What are the Pros and Cons of Becoming a Standby Guardian?**

The main advantage to a custodial parent of designating a standby guardian is that it gives that parent the power to control what happens to the child after his or her death, incapacitation, or inability to care for the child because of an adverse immigration action. The main advantage of being designated as the standby guardian is that it results in a court order granting custody of the child to the standby guardian, which is required for a third party to obtain a child's original birth certificate, to apply for a passport for a child, and to obtain certain types of benefits. Further, a court order will usually be honored in other states. A standby guardian designation also can be beneficial because it states the wishes of the custodial parent, thereby allowing for an easier transition of custody and reducing confusion if multiple caregivers step forward to care for the child.

A possible downside of standby guardianship is that, within 90 days of the triggering event, a petition must be filed in court to continue the standby guardian's legal authority. Further, if there is a surviving non-custodial parent whose rights have not been legally terminated or given up, there may be a contested custody hearing.

## 5. Who to Contact for More Information?

Go to the Family Court Self-Help Center located on the JM level of the D.C. Superior Court for sample forms and help completing them, or contact a local legal services organization or family law attorney for more information (see **Appendix C**). A sample standby guardian designation and sample petitions are available online at [dckincare.org/forms](https://dckincare.org/forms) or [lawhelp.org/dc/resource/pro-se-family-law-pleadings-for-individuals-w](https://lawhelp.org/dc/resource/pro-se-family-law-pleadings-for-individuals-w).

## G. Adoption

### 1. What is Adoption?

Under D.C. Law, an adoption occurs when (1) the parent-child relationship between the birth parents and the child is terminated, and (2) a new parent-child relationship is created between the adoptive parents and the child. Adoptions in D.C. can occur in both neglect cases (when the child is in foster care) or in a private case where there is no neglect case or CFSA involvement. D.C. adoptions are confidential and closed to the public.

## **2. Who Can Adopt a DC Child?**

Any adult may adopt a child in D.C. if: (a) you are a legal resident of D.C.; (b) you have resided in D.C. for at least one year prior to filing the adoption petition; (3) the child was born in D.C.; or (4) the child is in the D.C. foster care system. If you are married, you and your spouse must file the petition to adopt together. You do not have to be living with the child at the time you file a petition to adopt, but you must be living with the child for at least 6 months for a final decree of adoption to be issued.

## **3. How to Adopt a DC Child?**

You must file a petition to adopt in D.C. Court and serve a notice of the filing on the parents. CFSA will conduct an investigation (even if the case is not part of a foster care case) and submit a report that usually has information about the background and current status of the birth parents, adoptive parents and the child, and results of a home assessment, background checks, and medical records of the adoptive parents and other adults living in the home. The judge can grant an adoption if the parents agree and the judge believes the adoption is in the best interests of the child. The parents' agreement is not required if the parent cannot be located, or has abandoned and voluntarily failed to contribute to the child's support for a period of at least six months before the filing of the petition. Even if the parent objects, the judge can still grant the adoption if they decide that the parents are withholding consent without good reason and the adoption is in the best interests of the child. As part of the adoption decree, you can request that the child's name be changed.

## 2. What are the Pros and Cons of Adopting a DC Child?

The advantages of adopting a DC child is that it provides a permanent home for the child, you will be the parent of that child, and the child can inherit from you just like any of your other children. If the child is adopted from the foster care system, you will also get an adoption subsidy (see **Section III.L.** for more information on this subsidy).

Some disadvantages of adoption may be that the biological parents' rights are terminated and you may not want to have those relationships permanently severed. Also, as a parent, you will be responsible to care for the child until they turn 18.



## Part III: Help with Basic Needs

Relative caregivers may be eligible for help from the D.C. and/or federal government, even if they were not eligible before becoming a relative caregiver. Some of these programs are described below. A local legal services organization, family law attorney, CFSA, or the agency that is in charge of the program can provide more information about these services (see **Appendices** for contact information).

Please note there are different requirements for immigrants to be eligible for some of these benefits. In general, undocumented immigrants are not eligible to receive TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, or SSI. Lawful permanent residents, and certain other categories of immigrants (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking or domestic violence) may be eligible after a waiting period. A child's eligibility for benefits is not affected by the parent's or relative caregiver's immigration status, so a child may be eligible even if the parent or caregiver is not. Undocumented immigrants may be eligible for certain D.C. subsidized benefits, as well as emergency assistance, including WIC, emergency Medicaid, and treatment in hospital emergency rooms. For more information on immigrant eligibility for benefits, please contact the applicable government or community service provider or an immigration attorney.

## A. Grandparent Caregiver Program

### 1. What is the Grandparent Caregiver Program and Subsidy?

The Grandparent Caregiver Program is run by CFSA and provides monthly payments to grandparents, great aunts and great uncles living with and raising a grandchild, great-grandchild, great-niece, or great-nephew.

According to CFSA, a full subsidy payment (before offsets for TANF and SSI) is \$24.79 per day per child under 12 and \$27.92 per day per child older than 12. In 2021, participants could expect to receive an average daily rate of \$20.03 per child or an average 30-day monthly rate of \$610.00 per child, only about half the regular foster care monthly subsidy. More information about the program can be found at [cfsa.dc.gov/publication/program-grandparent-caregivers-program](https://cfsa.dc.gov/publication/program-grandparent-caregivers-program) or by calling CFSA at (202) 442-6009. The Grandparent Caregiver Program has annual budget limits. If the annual limit has been reached, applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

### 2. Who Can Get the Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy?

To receive the Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy, the relative caregiver must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ A grandchild, great grandchild, great niece, and/or great nephew under 18 years old lives in the home with the relative caregiver;
- ▶ The relative caregiver is the child's primary caregiver;

- ▶ The child's parent(s) do not live in the home. (This does not apply if the parent gave the relative caregiver standby guardianship, is a minor enrolled in school, or has a medically verifiable disability that prevents them from caring for the child);
- ▶ The relative caregiver lives in D.C.; or the relative does not live in D.C. but: (a) the child lived in D.C. within the 6 months before applying for the subsidy and the child's parent lived in D.C. at the time of application; or (b) the child lived in D.C. within the 6 months before applying for the subsidy, the child is currently enrolled in a D.C. school, and the child's parent has a disability that prevents the parent from caring for the child, regardless of the parent's place of residence. A relative caregiver who does not live in D.C. cannot receive subsidy payments for more than one year unless they move to D.C.
- ▶ The total of all money coming into the household is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (see [aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines));
- ▶ An application for TANF for the child has been submitted; and
- ▶ All adults living in the home have provided the results of national and local criminal background checks and Child Protection Registry checks.

### **3. How to Apply for the Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy?**

Before applying for a Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy, first apply for TANF for the child, as that is a requirement to receive the Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy. To be considered for the Grandparent Caregiver Program Subsidy, submit an application to CFSA. Request an application by:

- ▶ calling CFSA at (202) 442-6009 and asking them to mail an application;
- ▶ visiting CFSA at 200 I St., SE, Washington, D.C., 20003 (CFSA strongly recommends calling to set up an appointment before coming into the office); or
- ▶ going online: [dckincare.org/forms](https://dckincare.org/forms).

The relative caregiver will have to prove that they are the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle by providing documentation such as birth certificates, acknowledgements of paternity, court orders, and DNA tests. The relative will also need to show that the total amount of money coming into the household is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). Finally, the relative caregiver will have to prove they are the child's primary caregiver in one of these two ways:

- (a) Providing a court order granting the relative caregiver custody or standby guardianship or stating the relative caregiver adopted the child; **or**
- (b) Providing any of the following: (i) school records showing that the relative caregiver enrolled the child in school the most recent school year or is the primary educational contact for the child; (ii) immunization or medical records, no more than two years old, showing the relative caregiver is providing for the child's medical needs; (iii) records showing the relative caregiver received either SSI or TANF for the child for at least the last six months; or (iv) a letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, social service or similar professional, or landlord describing the relative caregiver's status in caring for the child; **and** completing the checklist on page two of the application stating why the parents are unable to care for the child.

All adults (18 years old and over) living in the household will be required to come to CFSA for fingerprinting for an FBI check, a local police clearance, and a Child Protection Registry Check.

When the application packet is complete, the next step is to call CFSA at (202) 442-6009 to determine the best way to submit the application and documents. Once approved, the relative will enter into a subsidy agreement with CFSA and receive a subsidy debit card. CFSA is working on an online application process.

## B. Close Relative Caregiver Program

### 1. What is the Close Relative Caregiver Program and Subsidy?

The Close Relative Caregiver Program is run by CFSA and provides monthly payments to aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, or godparents living with and raising a niece, nephew, cousin, sibling, or godchild. A “godparent” means someone who had close personal or emotional ties with the child or the child’s family before the child came to live with them.

According to CFSA, a full subsidy payment (before offsets for TANF and SSI) is \$24.79 per day per child under 12 and \$27.92 per day per child older than 12. In 2021, participants could expect to receive an average daily rate of \$23.26 per child or an average 30-day monthly rate of \$697.81 per child, only about half the regular foster care monthly subsidy. More information about the program can be found on the CFSA website at [cfsa.dc.gov/service/close-relative-caregiver-pilot-program](https://cfsa.dc.gov/service/close-relative-caregiver-pilot-program), or by contacting CFSA at 1-866-326-5461 or

**[cfsa.kinfirst.dc.gov](https://cfsa.kinfirst.dc.gov)**. The Close Relative Caregiver Program has annual budget limits. If the annual limit has been reached, applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

## **2. Who Can Get the Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy?**

To receive the Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy, the relative caregiver must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ Be an aunt, uncle, cousin, sibling, or godparent of the child;
- ▶ A niece, nephew, cousin, sibling or godchild under 18 years old lives in the home with the relative caregiver;
- ▶ The relative caregiver is the child's primary caregiver;
- ▶ The child's parent(s) do not live in the home. (This does not apply if the parent gave the relative caregiver standby guardianship, is a minor enrolled in school, or is a minor with a medically verifiable disability that prevents them from caring for the child);
- ▶ The relative caregiver lives in D.C.; or the relative does not live in D.C. but: (a) the child lived in D.C. within the 6 months before applying for the subsidy and the child's parent lived in D.C. at the time of application; or (b) the child lived in D.C. within the 6 months before applying for the subsidy, the child is currently enrolled in a D.C. school, and the child's parent has a disability that prevents the parent from caring for the child, regardless of the parent's place of residence. A relative caregiver who does not live in D.C. cannot receive subsidy payments for more than one year unless they move to D.C.
- ▶ The total of all money coming into the household is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (see **[aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines)**);

- ▶ An application for TANF for the child has been submitted; and
- ▶ All adults living in the home have provided the results of national and local criminal background checks and Child Protection Registry checks.

### 3. How to Apply for the Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy?

Before applying for a Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy, first apply for TANF for the child, as that is a requirement to receive the Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy. To be considered for the Close Relative Caregiver Program Subsidy, submit an application to CFSA. Request an application by:

- ▶ calling or emailing CFSA at (866) 326-5461 or [cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov), and asking them to mail an application;
- ▶ visiting CFSA at 200 I Street, SE, Washington, D.C., 20003 (CFSA strongly recommends calling to set up an appointment before coming into the office); or
- ▶ going online: [dckincare.org/forms](https://dckincare.org/forms).

The relative caregiver will have to prove that they are the child's aunt, uncle, cousin, sibling or godparent by providing documentation such as birth certificates, acknowledgements of paternity, court orders, and DNA tests. The relative will also need to show that the total amount of money coming into the household is less than 200% of FPL. Finally, the relative caregiver will also have to prove they are the child's primary caregiver in one of these two ways:

- (a) Providing a court order granting the relative caregiver custody or standby guardianship or stating the relative caregiver adopted the child; **or**

- (b) Providing any of the following: (i) school records showing that the relative caregiver enrolled the child in school the most recent school year or is the primary educational contact for the child; (ii) immunization or medical records, no more than two years old, showing the relative caregiver is providing for the child's medical needs; (iii) records showing the relative caregiver received either SSI or TANF for the child for at least the last six months; or (iv) a letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, social service or similar professional, or landlord describing the relative caregiver's status in caring for the child; **and** completing the checklist on page two of the application stating why the parents are unable to care for the child.

All adults (18 years old and over) living in the household will be required to come to CFSA for fingerprinting for an FBI check, a local police clearance, and a Child Protection Registry Check.

When the application packet is complete, the next step is to call or email CFSA at 202-727-4545 or **[cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov)** to determine the best way to submit the application and documents. Once approved, the relative caregiver will enter into a subsidy agreement with CFSA and receive a subsidy debit card. CFSA is working on an online application process.



## C. Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/General Assistance (GA)

### 1. What is TANF or GA?

The TANF or GA program provides financial assistance to needy families with dependent children. See **Appendix A** for the FY 2022 income limits for eligibility and the TANF grant amounts. The program also helps you find employment through job training, job readiness, child care, tuition assistance, case management, and other services. You will be required to participate in work, education, or training services unless you get an exemption.

### 2. Who Can Get TANF or GA?

To be eligible you must be a D.C. resident **and**:

- ▶ Be living with and responsible for a child under 18, or under 19 who is enrolled in a full-time secondary school (or similar vocational or technical program);
- ▶ Be a U.S. national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident (or certain other immigrant, such as refugee, victim of human trafficking, or domestic violence victim);
- ▶ Have low-income well below the Federal Poverty Level (see **Appendix A**);
- ▶ Meet asset limits of \$2,000 (\$3,000 if person 60 or older or disabled lives in household); and
- ▶ Be under-employed, unemployed, or about to become unemployed.

**\*For TANF, you must also be related to the child.**

A court order or Custodial Power of Attorney is **not** required to receive TANF or General Assistance, but proof that the child lives with you must be provided for both, and proof the child is related to you must be provided for TANF.

### 3. How to Apply for TANF?

A relative caregiver can apply for TANF for the entire household, or just for the child. If applying only for the child, the TANF amount will be less, but the relative caregiver's income and assets will not be counted in determining eligibility and the TANF work requirements are waived. The requirements for GA are the same as for child-only TANF but DC will also conduct an assessment of your home. To apply for TANF or GA, fill out an application and submit it online at [districtdirect.dc.gov](https://districtdirect.dc.gov), by mail or in person to a D.C. Economic Security Administration Service Center. A list of Centers is available in **Appendix A** to this Guide, or find a Center at [dhs.dc.gov/node/117522](https://dhs.dc.gov/node/117522). Combined Applications for TANF, food stamps (SNAP), and Medicaid/D.C. Healthy Families can be obtained at a Center, online at [dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov](https://dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov) or on the District First Mobile App. After submitting the application, an interview will be scheduled. The chart at **Appendix A** lists the documents to bring to an interview. Applying for TANF requires the applicant to sign over any rights to get child support from the parent(s) to the D.C. government. The D.C. government is required to process a completed TANF application within 45 days of receipt.

## D. Food Stamps (SNAP)

### 1. What are Food Stamps?

D.C. offers food stamps through its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) that helps low-income families buy food for their household, including any children in their care.

### 2. Who Can Get Food Stamps?

SNAP has specific requirements and limits for receiving food stamps. Whether a household can receive food stamps and the amount depends on a number of factors. A household generally means parents, relative caregivers and children, as well as others living in the household who prepare food together. In general, if all members of the household receive TANF, SSI, or in some circumstances General Assistance, the household will automatically be eligible for SNAP benefits. Otherwise, the household must meet certain gross and net income limits, as well as an asset test (limit of up to \$2,250 in countable resources such as cash or money in the bank), to be eligible for SNAP. Households with an elderly or disabled person must have assets less than \$3,500 but do not need to meet the gross income limit, and will not need to meet the net income limit if their income is below the gross income limit. The amount of SNAP benefit is determined by multiplying the household’s net monthly income by 0.3 and subtracting that from the maximum monthly allotment for the household size. An explanation of the SNAP requirements, limits, and allotment amounts can be found at **Appendix A**, or on the D.C. Department of Human Services website at [dhs.dc.gov/service/snap-eligibility](https://dhs.dc.gov/service/snap-eligibility). A court order or other form of legal custody is **not** required to get SNAP assistance, but proof that the child lives in the household is required.

### 3. How to Apply for Food Stamps?

To apply for SNAP, fill out an application and submit it online at [districtdirect.dc.gov](https://districtdirect.dc.gov), by mail or in person to a D.C. Economic Security Administration Service Center. A list of Centers is available at **Appendix A**, or find a Center at [dhs.dc.gov/node/117522](https://dhs.dc.gov/node/117522). Obtain a combined application for TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid at a Center, online at [dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov](https://dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov), or on the District First Mobile App. After submitting the application, an interview will be scheduled. See the chart at **Appendix A** for the types of documents to bring to the interview. SNAP applications must be processed within 30 days of submitting a complete application. To qualify for expedited SNAP within 7 days, a household must have less than \$100 in assets and make less than \$150 a month in income, or the household monthly rent/mortgage and utilities must be more than household gross income.

## E. Medical Assistance in D.C.

### 1. What Types of Medical Assistance Does D.C. Provide?

D.C. Healthy Families is a health insurance program for D.C. residents who are U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants, and meet income and/or asset requirements. D.C. also operates the D.C. Health Care Alliance, a managed health care plan that does not have citizenship requirements and provides medical assistance to D.C. residents with low-income and limited assets who are not eligible for Medicare, Medicaid, or other health insurance. D.C. further runs the Immigrant Children's Program for individuals under age 21 who are not

eligible for Medicaid. These programs generally cover doctor visits, hospital care, prescription drugs, child early intervention services, and many other services at little or no cost.

## 2. Who Can Get D.C. Medical Assistance?

If you receive TANF, you will automatically be eligible for D.C. Medical Assistance. Otherwise, to be eligible for D.C. Healthy Families, you must be a resident of D.C., a U.S. citizen or an eligible immigrant, **and** meet one of the following income limits based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (see [aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines)) and asset limits (if applicable):

Children (age 0–18) — income 319% FPL

Youth (age 19–20) — income 216% FPL

Pregnant Women — income 319% FPL

Elderly (65 or over), Blind, or Disabled — income 100% FPL and assets less than \$4,000

Adults (age 21–64) — income 210% FPL

There are no income or asset limits for certain people, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, foster care or former foster care subsidy recipients, and Medicare savings program recipients. See [dhcf.dc.gov/service/dc-healthy-families](https://dhcf.dc.gov/service/dc-healthy-families) for more information on eligibility.

To be eligible for D.C. Health Care Alliance, you must be a D.C. resident **and** meet the following requirements:

- ▶ age 21 or older;
- ▶ have a household income at or below 200% of the FPL;
- ▶ have assets below \$4,000 for one person and \$6,000 for couples or families; and

- ▶ not have other health insurance and not be eligible for Medicare or Medicaid.

To be eligible for the Immigrant Children's Program, you must be a D.C. resident **and** meet the following requirements:

- ▶ under age 21;
- ▶ not be eligible for Medicaid; and
- ▶ have income at or below 200% of FPL (there is no asset test).

In general, a custody order or Custodial Power of Attorney granting custody of the child is **not** required to get Medical Assistance, but you must show that the child lives in the household and that you have the right to obtain Medical Assistance for the child.

### 3. How to Apply for D.C. Medical Assistance?

If applying for D.C. Healthy Families and you are not 65 or older, blind, or disabled, you must complete the DC Health Link Application for Health Coverage. Applications are available at any D.C. Health Link Enrollment Center (see [dchealthlink.com/enrollmentcenters](https://dchealthlink.com/enrollmentcenters) or **Call (855) 532-5465** for locations), a D.C. Economic Security Administration Service Center (see **Appendix A** for locations), or online at [dchealthlink.com/individuals/medicaid](https://dchealthlink.com/individuals/medicaid). Apply by mail or in person to a D.C. Health Link Enrollment Center. Call the D.C. Health Link Customer Service Center toll-free at (855) 532-5465 for help with the application.

If applying for D.C. Healthy Families and you are 65 or older, blind or disabled, or you are applying for D.C. Health Care Alliance, you must complete a combined application for TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid/D.C. Healthy Families. You can

submit the D.C. Healthy Families application in person, online, or by mail. If applying for D.C. Health Care Alliance, you must come in person to a D.C. Economic Security Administration Service Center (see list of Center locations at **Appendix A** or online at [dhs.dc.gov/node/117522](https://dhs.dc.gov/node/117522)).

## F. WIC

### 1. What is WIC?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutrient-rich foods, nutrition counseling and education, breast-feeding support, health care assessment and screening, and referrals to health and social service providers.

### 2. Who Can Get D.C. WIC benefits?

D.C. WIC benefits are available for pregnant or breast-feeding women, new mothers, infants, and children up to the age of five. A WIC recipient must live in D.C., have a nutritional or medical risk as determined by a nutritionist or other health professional, **and** either meet the income guidelines (income cannot be more than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level [aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines)) **or** be a participant in Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP.

### 3. How to Apply for D.C. WIC?

To apply for D.C. WIC, call (202) 442-9397. You will be asked a few eligibility questions. If eligible, schedule an appointment at any WIC clinic (call for clinic locations or go online at [dcwic.org](https://dcwic.org)). On the day of the appointment, plan to spend about an hour at the clinic and bring the following information:

- ▶ Proof of D.C. residence (a bill or letter addressed to home address in the past 30 days);
- ▶ Proof of total family income (last two check stubs or Medicaid, D.C. Healthy Families, School Lunch Program, TANF, or SNAP notice);
- ▶ Proof you are living with and caring for the child (e.g., court order or custodial power of attorney);
- ▶ Proof of pregnancy or proof of birth (birth certificate or discharge papers);
- ▶ Child's shot record;
- ▶ Child (all children who are eligible, ages 1–5); and
- ▶ Referral from a health care provider.

## G. SSI for Children

### 1. What is SSI for Children?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for Children is a federal program that provides cash assistance to children who are disabled or blind.

### 2. Who Can Get SSI for Children Benefits?

To qualify as a child for purposes of SSI, he or she must be **either**: (a) under age 18 and neither married nor the head of the household; **or** (b) under age 22 and regularly attending school. A child must be blind or disabled to be eligible. The household also must meet income limits or be receiving TANF. To determine a child's eligibility for SSI, fill out the short questionnaire online at [ssabest.benefits.gov](https://ssabest.benefits.gov).



### 3. How to Apply for SSI for Children Benefits?

To apply for SSI for Children benefits, complete an Application for Supplemental Security Income and a Child Disability Report. A Child Disability Starter Kit is available online at [ssa.gov/disability/disability\\_starter\\_kits\\_child\\_eng.htm](https://ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits_child_eng.htm), and the Child Disability Report is also available online at [ssa.gov/childdisabilityreport](https://ssa.gov/childdisabilityreport). To complete the application, call (800) 772-1213 or visit a local Social Security Office to set up an interview (call or go online at [secure.ssa.gov](https://secure.ssa.gov) to find your local office). At the interview, you will need to provide names and contact information for the child's doctor(s), names of any medications the child takes, an original copy of the child's birth certificate, the child's IEPs or IFSPs, and the child's medical assistance number, if any. A court order or Custodial Power of Attorney granting a relative caregiver legal custody of the child will usually be required because he or she must sign a form giving the child's medical providers permission to provide medical information about the child's disability.

## H. Child Care Subsidy Program

### 1. What is the Child Care Subsidy Program?

The Child Care Subsidy Program helps low-income D.C. families pay for child care for children 6 months to 12 years old. If the child has disabilities, the subsidy may cover child care costs until 19 years old. The subsidy may cover all or part of child care costs, and is paid directly to the child care provider. The amount of the subsidy will depend on the family's need, financial resources, and size. The child care must be

provided by a Licensed Child Care Provider or a Licensed Child Development Home. A Licensed Child Care Provider can be found by contacting D.C. Child Care Connections at (202) 829-2500 or by going online to [dcchildcareconnections.org](https://dcchildcareconnections.org). If a child care provider cannot be found, another provider may be used if he or she enters into an agreement with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to maintain certain health, safety, and education requirements.

## 2. Who Can Get a Child Care Subsidy?

Working families with income at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level ([aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines)), families receiving TANF who participate in required education and training programs, families getting additional education to improve employment opportunities, teen parents seeking a high school degree or GED, and certain other individuals raising children may be eligible for a child care subsidy. The person applying for the subsidy must be the parent (biological or through a court adoption order) or the legal guardian (via court custody or guardianship order) of the child. A notarized letter from the parent granting custody is not acceptable. The child must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident (information about the parent's or legal guardian's citizenship status is not required).

## 3. How to Apply for a Child Care Subsidy?

To apply for a child care subsidy, complete the **OSSE Child Care Subsidy Application**, gather the required documentation, and bring them to the D.C. Child Care Service Division in person. (See **Appendix B** for required documentation, locations and hours). For answers to frequently asked questions, go to [osse.dc.gov/childcaresubsidyfaq](https://osse.dc.gov/childcaresubsidyfaq).

Documentation must show the following (see **Appendix B** for acceptable documentation):

- ▶ identity;
- ▶ citizenship or legal status of the child;
- ▶ income;
- ▶ need for child care;
- ▶ DC residency;
- ▶ relationship to the child; and
- ▶ up-to-date immunizations for the child.

## I. D.C. Public School Free or Reduced-Price Meal Program

### 1. What is the D.C. Public School Free or Reduced-Price Meal Program?

DC Public Schools (DCPS) provides free breakfast to all students, as well as free snacks and a light dinner to students attending after-school programs. DCPS students can also buy school lunch or get free or reduced cost lunch if certain financial eligibility requirements are met (see [\*\*dcps.dc.gov/farm\*\*](https://dcps.dc.gov/farm) for more information). D.C. also has a Free Summer Meals Program that provides free nutritious meals and snacks to children 18 years old and younger in low-income areas during the summer months when they are out of school (see [\*\*osse.dc.gov/dcsummermeals\*\*](https://osse.dc.gov/dcsummermeals) for more information).

## **2. Who Can Get the D.C. Public School Free or Reduced-Price Meal Program?**

All DCPS students can get free breakfast and, if they participate in an after-school program, they can get free snacks and a light dinner. All students can also pay for lunch. A student can get a free or reduced-price lunch if he or she is a D.C. resident, the student's household receives TANF or SNAP, or the household income meets the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines (see [fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines](https://fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines)).

## **3. How to Apply for the D.C. Public School Free or Reduced-Price Meal Program?**

There is no application for free breakfast or after-school snacks or dinner. To apply for a free or reduced-price lunch, fill out the Free and Reduced-Price Meal (FARM) Application, which is sent home at the beginning of each school year. Otherwise, pick up an application at the school, complete the application online at [dcps.dc.gov/publication/free-and-reduced-priced-meals-farm-application](https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/free-and-reduced-priced-meals-farm-application), or print and mail or fax it to: The Office of Food & Nutrition Services, Attn: Nadine James, 1200 First St., NE, 9th Floor, Washington, DC 20002; Fax: (202) 727-2512. For questions about FARM, call (202) 299-2159 or email [farm.dcps@dc.gov](mailto:farm.dcps@dc.gov). To find a D.C. Free Summer Meals Location, text "FOOD" to 877-877, call 1-866-3-HUNGRY, or visit [fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks](https://fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks).

## J. Child Support

### 1. What is Child Support?

When a child is in the physical custody of a relative caregiver, both the child's mother and father generally remain responsible for paying for the child's basic needs under the law. Whether the parent(s) must pay child support and the amount will be determined by the court.

### 2. Who Can Get Child Support?

A relative caregiver with physical custody of a child may be eligible to receive child support. The relative caregiver's income will not be considered in determining how much child support the child's parent(s) must pay, and the child's parent(s) may be required to pay child support even if the relative caregiver has enough money to care for the child on his or her own. The Child Support Guideline Calculator ([csgc.oag.dc.gov/application/main/intro.aspx](https://csgc.oag.dc.gov/application/main/intro.aspx)) can be used to determine the amount of child support. A relative caregiver must have a court order granting physical custody of the child to get child support. Child support is generally not available to foster parents.

### 3. How to Apply for Child Support?

If a court has ordered that a relative caregiver have physical custody of the child, the relative can ask the court to order the parent(s) to pay child support. The relative caregiver must file a child support case at the Family Court Central Intake Center. The best option may be to ask the D.C. Attorney General's office to file and handle the case. Information is available at [cssd.dc.gov/page/receiving-support](https://cssd.dc.gov/page/receiving-support), or go to the Child Support Services Division of the Attorney General's Office located at

441 4th St., NW, Room N550, Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:15am and 4:45pm Monday through Friday (phone: (202) 442-9900). For the D.C. Attorney General to handle the child support case, the following are required:

- ▶ A completed Child Support Services Division IV-D Application, which can be obtained at the Child Support Services Division Office or online at: **[cssd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cssd/page\\_content/attachments/DC Child Support Services Application final 11117 - Fillable - Smaller.pdf](https://cssd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cssd/page_content/attachments/DC%20Child%20Support%20Services%20Application%20final%2011117%20-%20Fillable%20-%20Smaller.pdf)**
- ▶ Three certified copies of the Custody Order;
- ▶ Proof of income like pay stubs, W-2s, or tax returns;
- ▶ Proof of D.C. residency, such as a telephone or utility bill;
- ▶ Proof of identification like a driver's license or passport; and
- ▶ A one-time \$5.00 fee by money order or check to the D.C. Treasurer. NO CASH.

## K. Foster Care Subsidy

### 1. What is a Foster Care Subsidy?

A foster care subsidy is a set amount of money paid on a monthly basis to a licensed foster parent who cares for a foster child, including a relative caregiver licensed as a foster parent, known as a “kinship foster parent.” The amount of the subsidy varies based on the number of foster children in the home, whether they have a disability, and the extent of their needs. Foster care rates in D.C. for 2022 range from \$1,140 to \$1,995 per child per 30-day month. Foster care rates are calculated and adjusted each year to account for cost of living increases. There is no income eligibility requirement for the foster care subsidy, and other benefits are not deducted from the rate.

## 2. Who Can Get a Foster Care Subsidy?

Only licensed foster parents can receive a foster care subsidy. The requirements for a relative caregiver to become a licensed foster parent in D.C. are explained in **Part II.D.** of this Guide, in the section labeled “Foster Care.” If a relative caregiver becomes a licensed foster parent, and has a foster child in the home, he or she will receive the foster care subsidy on a monthly basis.

## 3. How to Apply for a Foster Care Subsidy?

A foster care subsidy is only available to licensed foster parents. An application must be submitted to CFSA to become a licensed foster parent. Foster parent training is also required to become licensed. Once licensed, the foster parent will enter into a foster care subsidy agreement with CFSA. More information about foster care licensing, the subsidy, and rates is available from CFSA (see **Appendix C** for contact information).

## L. Permanent Guardianship or Adoption Subsidy

### 1. What is a Permanent Guardianship or Adoption Subsidy?

A permanent guardianship or adoption subsidy is a monthly cash payment that is usually the same amount as the foster care subsidy. (See **Section III.J** of this Guide). There is no income eligibility requirement for the permanent guardianship or adoption subsidy, and other benefits are not deducted from the rate.

## **2. Who Can Get a Permanent Guardianship or Adoption or Subsidy?**

Only the permanent guardian or adoptive parent approved by the court who has been licensed as a foster parent may get the subsidy.

## **3. How to Apply for a Guardianship or Adoption Subsidy?**

The proposed permanent guardian must apply for the guardianship or adoption subsidy on a form provided by CFSA. The proposed guardian or adoptive parent and CFSA must enter into a subsidy agreement before entry of the court's permanent guardianship or adoption order. More information about the permanent guardianship or adoption subsidy and rates are available from CFSA (see **Appendix C** for contact information).

## **M. Financial Power of Attorney (Statutory Power of Attorney)**

### **1. What is a Financial Power of Attorney?**

A Financial Power of Attorney (FPOA) allows someone to name a relative, friend, lawyer, or another trusted person to act as their representative with respect to financial matters, such as managing property (like homes and cars) or businesses, managing bank accounts, receiving public benefits, handling taxes, and transferring money to or on behalf of the person.



## 2. Who Can be Named as a Representative in a Financial Power of Attorney?

A parent can name a relative caregiver as their representative in an FPOA. A parent may want to do this when the relative caregiver is caring for the child, and the parent wants to ensure the relative caregiver has the resources to do so.

## 3. How to Complete a Financial Power of Attorney?

A person can complete the FPOA online at [code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/21-2101.html](https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/21-2101.html). It must be notarized. The Financial Power of Attorney can be revoked at any time, but make sure to notify anyone who received a copy of the FPOA that it has been revoked. For help in completing the FPOA, contact a legal services provider (see **Appendix D** to this Guide).

# N. Housing Assistance

## 1. What Housing Assistance Programs Are Available to Relative Caregivers of DC Children?

Relative caregivers can get the same housing assistance as other families in DC if they meet the eligibility requirements. These assistance programs include housing vouchers, homelessness prevention assistance (including rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency rental assistance).

## 2. How to Apply for DC Housing Assistance?

Every family at risk of or experiencing homelessness in DC must register at Virginia Williams Resource Center (VWRC) before receiving housing and social services. Contact information is available at **Appendix C** to this Guide.

You can also add children to your Section 8 housing voucher or public housing lease by notifying the DC Housing Authority or your leasing office in writing of any additions to your household. You can also become head of household of a voucher or lease if the parent is deceased or permanently absent from the home.

You will need to prove the child is living in your household. VWRC and DC Housing Authority (DCHA) usually ask for a permanent custody order to prove the child is living in your household and there is a caregiving relationship. If you do not have a permanent custody order, VWRC and DCHA should accept a temporary custody order, proof you filed for custody, or a notarized authorization from the child's legal guardian (such as a custodial power of attorney). They may also accept school or medical records, public benefit records, and/or sworn statements from medical, legal, social service professionals, teachers or clergy.

# APPENDIX A

## D.C. Economic Security Administration Service Centers (TANF/SNAP/Medicaid) [dhs.dc.gov/service/whats-new-tanf](https://dhs.dc.gov/service/whats-new-tanf)

Service Center	Address	Phone	Fax
Anacostia	2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE	(202) 645-4614	(202) 727-3527
Congress Heights	4049 South Capitol St., SW	(202) 645-4525	(202) 645-4524
*Fort Davis	3851 Alabama Ave., SE	(202) 645-4500	(202) 645-6205
H St.	645 H St., NE	(202) 698-4350	(202) 724-8964
*Taylor St.	1207 Taylor St., NW	(202) 576-8000	(202) 576-8740

### Hours of Operation

Mon.–Fri.: 7:30 am–4:45 pm

*\*These centers are temporarily closed.*

### ESA's Customer Service Number

(202) 727-5355

## Documents Needed for Benefits Interviews

Proof of:	Examples
Identity	Government Issued ID, collateral contact who does not live with you
Income	Recent paystubs; statement showing retirement income, disability income, workers comp, unemployment benefit, pension, or social security benefit, etc.
Assets	Recent bank and checking account statements, etc.
D.C. Residency	D.C. driver's license, lease, rent receipt, written statement from landlord, utility or telephone bill, collateral contact, etc.
Social Security Number	Social Security card; tax or payroll documents with your SSN on it; D.C. driver's license with your SSN on it; etc. (Not required for Food Stamp-only applicants)
Immigration Information	Employment Authorization card, I-94, visa, passport, other INS documents
Medical Exam Report / Disability (Disability MA)	Recent medical report (or Form 856) and any supporting materials from your doctor
Rent / Mortgage (SNAP Only)	Lease, rent receipt, cancelled check, mortgage statement, etc.
Utility Bills (SNAP Only)	Recent bills: electric/gas/fuel/phone/water/telephone (if separate from rent)
Other expenses (SNAP Only)	Childcare/child support payments, medical expenses for elderly or disabled not covered by insurance
Relationship (TANF Only)	Child birth certificate (full copy), your birth certificate to show related to child, and other birth certificates to show relatedness to the child; <b>or</b> two of the following: official school/child care/health records; letter from priest or minister; family bible
"Living With" (TANF Only)	Official school records <b>or</b> two of the following: statement from non-relative, landlord or clergy; child care or medical record; child support order; child welfare records

# APPENDIX A

## TANF Grants (Oct. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022):

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Income	Maximum Monthly TANF Benefit Amount
1	\$450	\$418
2	\$560	\$521
3	\$712	\$665
4	\$870	\$813
5	\$1,002	\$939
6	\$1,178	\$1,104
7	\$1,352	\$1,266
8	\$1,494	\$1,398
9	\$1,642	\$1,540
10	\$1,786	\$1,672

\* If a family has child care costs, there is a maximum monthly income limit increase by \$175 per child age 2 or over, and \$200 per child under the age of two.

## SNAP Grants (Oct. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022):

Household Size	Monthly Income 100% FPL	Monthly Income 200% FPL	Monthly Maximum SNAP Benefit
1	\$1,133	\$2,265	\$250
2	\$1,526	\$3,052	\$459
3	\$1,919	\$3,838	\$658
4	\$2,313	\$4,625	\$835
5	\$2,706	\$5,412	\$992
6	\$3,099	\$6,198	\$1,190
7	\$3,493	\$6,985	\$1,316
8	\$3,886	\$7,772	\$1,508
Each additional person	\$393	\$787	\$188

# APPENDIX B

## **D.C. Child Care Subsidy Program** **[dhs.dc.gov/service/child-care-services](https://dhs.dc.gov/service/child-care-services)**

Congress Heights Service Center  
4049 South Capitol St., SW  
Washington, DC 20032

Walk-Ins: Mon., Tues., Wed. 8:15 am–3:30 pm

By appointment: (202) 727-0284

You must apply in person and submit a completed **OSSE Child Care Subsidy Application** and **ONE** document from each category in the following chart:

Identity of Applicant	(1) Unexpired DC License; (2) Unexpired Government ID; (3) U.S. Passport; (4) Current photo ID
Citizenship Verification & Legal Status of Child	(1) US birth certificate; (2) Legal Permanent Resident Card or INS docs; (2) Unexpired I-94 or other immigrant reg card; (3) Unexpired Visa
Medical	(1) Completed and up-to-date DC Universal Health Certificate for the child
Verification of Countable Income	(1) Two consecutively dated pay statements, the last dated within 30 days of Intake with name, date of pay and income before deductions; (2) Statement from employer dated within 30 days if newly employed or if pay statements are downloaded or do not contain all information; (3) Copy of last year's tax return, if self-employed
Verification of Other Income	(1) Current benefit check or award letter dated within 30 days of Intake; (2) Copies of child support or alimony payment; (3) Court order showing benefit amount
Need for Child Care	(1) Work, training and/or school schedule for parent(s) or guardian(s); (2) Proof of Child or Applicant Disability
Verification of Relationship between Applicant and Child Receiving Benefits	(1) Child Birth Certificate; (2) Hospital Record of Birth; (3) Current and Valid Adoption or Custody Order; (4) Referral from a DC Government agency/vendor verifying relationship, and receipt of benefits on behalf of child
Verification of Residency (Documentation must be issued within 30 days of intake)	(1) Official rent receipt on company form or letterhead; (2) Evidence of home ownership: current mortgage payment; (3) Lease, mortgage, or housing subsidy document; (4) Utility bill: PEPCO/gas/water/home phone (not cell/cable bill); (5) E-bills for utilities showing name, address & 2 pieces current mail; (6) Notarized statement plus 2 pieces of mail; (7) Referral from DC agency; (8) Docs no more than 30 days old of TANF/SNAP/Medicaid benefits; (9) Pay stub showing DC address and DC withholding taxes

# APPENDIX C

## D.C. Government and Community-Based Social Services Programs, Information & Referral Centers

### **A Wider Circle**

(Furniture and Social Services)  
9159 Brookville Rd.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
[awidercircle.org](http://awidercircle.org)  
[contact@awidercircle.org](mailto:contact@awidercircle.org)  
(301) 608-3504

### **Bread for the City**

(Custody, Housing, Public Benefits)  
[breadforthecity.org](http://breadforthecity.org)

Southeast Center  
1700 Good Hope Rd., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 561-8587

Northwest Center  
1525 7th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 265-2400

### **Byte Back**

(Free Technology Training and Career Services)  
899 North Capitol St., NE,  
Suite 850  
Washington, DC 20002  
[byteback.org](http://byteback.org)  
[bba@byteback.org](mailto:bba@byteback.org)  
(202) 529-3395

### **Capitol Area Food Bank**

(Food/Hunger Resources)  
[capitalareafoodbank.org/get-help](http://capitalareafoodbank.org/get-help)  
Hunger Lifeline:  
(202) 644-9807  
Mon.–Fri.: 9 am–5 pm

### **Catholic Charities DC**

(Various Social Services and Locations)  
Main Address:  
924 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/gethelp)  
(202) 234-2399

Emergency Rental Assistance Program:  
220 Highview Pl., SE  
(202) 574-3442

### **Community of Hope**

(Health Care and Social Services)  
[communityofhopedc.org](http://communityofhopedc.org)  
Conway Health and Resource Center:  
4 Atlantic St., SW  
Washington, DC 20032

Family Health and Birth Center:  
801 17th St., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 398-5520

Marie Reed Health Center:  
2155 Champlain St., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 540-9857

The Commons at Stanton Square:  
2375 Elvans Rd., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 540-9857

### **Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness**

920-A Rhoda Island Ave., NW  
(202) 724-4208  
Mon–Thur. 8:30 am–4 pm

### **Connect DC-Digital Inclusion Initiative**

(Computer and Internet Access and Training)  
200 I St., SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
[connect.dc.gov](http://connect.dc.gov)  
[octo@dc.gov](mailto:octo@dc.gov)  
(202) 266-6328  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:30 am–5:30 pm

### **Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)**

200 I St., SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
[cfsa.dc.gov](http://cfsa.dc.gov)  
(202) 442-6100  
Kinship Navigator Program  
Kinship support services and funding  
866-326-5461  
[cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov)  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:15 am–4:45 pm

### **Collaborative Support for Communities**

(Social Services, Case Coord. & Referral)  
3333 14th St., NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20010  
[gafsc-dc.org](http://gafsc-dc.org)  
[wearecsc.org](http://wearecsc.org)  
(202) 518-6737  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:30 am–5 pm

### **DC127**

(Prevent Children Entering Foster Care)  
1616 7th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[dc127.org](http://dc127.org)  
[info@dc127.org](mailto:info@dc127.org)  
(202) 670-1145

### **DC Department of Disability Services**

(Services for Persons with Disabilities)  
250 E St., SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
[dds@dc.gov](mailto:dds@dc.gov)  
[dds.dc.gov](http://dds.dc.gov)  
(202) 730-1700

# APPENDIX C

## **DC Housing Authority**

(Public Housing; Housing Choice Vouchers)  
1133 North Capitol St., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
[dchousing.org](http://dchousing.org)  
(202) 535-1000

## **East River Family Strengthening Collaborative** (Social Services, Case Coord. & Referral)

3917 Minnesota Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20019  
[erfsc.org](http://erfsc.org)  
(202) 397-7300  
(202) 329-1664 after-hours emergency  
Mon.–Thurs.: 8:30 am–8 pm  
Fri.: 8:30 am–5 pm

## **Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative**

(Social Services, Case Coord. & Referral)  
611 Edgewood St., NE, #106  
601 Edgewood St., NE, #25  
801 7th St., SW  
Washington, DC  
[ebfsc.org](http://ebfsc.org)  
(202) 832-9400  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:30 am–5 pm

## **Family Court Self-Help Center**

DC Superior Court  
500 Indiana Ave., NW,  
Rm JM-570  
Washington, DC 20001  
[dccourts.gov/services/family-matters/self-help-center](http://dccourts.gov/services/family-matters/self-help-center)  
(202) 879-1212  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:00 am–5 pm  
Last intake: 4:30 pm

## **Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative** (Social Services, Case Coord. & Referral)

2006 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE, #304  
Washington, DC 20020  
[fsfsc.org](http://fsfsc.org)  
(202) 889-1425  
Mon.–Thurs.: 9 am–8 pm  
Fri.: 9 am–5:30 pm

## **Food For All DC**

(Non-Perishable Food Delivery for Disabled/Homebound)  
[foodforalldc.wordpress.com/contact](http://foodforalldc.wordpress.com/contact)  
(202) 642-6660

## **Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC)**

508 Kennedy St., NW,  
Room 303  
Washington, DC 20011  
[info@dcfapac.org](mailto:info@dcfapac.org)  
[dcfapac.org](http://dcfapac.org)  
(202) 269-9441

## **Georgia Ave. Family Support Collaborative**

(Social Services, Case Coord. & Referral)  
508 Kennedy St., NW  
4420 Georgia Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
[gafsc-dc.org](http://gafsc-dc.org)  
(202) 722-1815  
Mon.–Fri.: 9 am–5 pm

## **Health Services for Children with Special Needs**

(Medicaid Health Plan for Children with Special Needs)  
1101 Vermont Ave., NW,  
Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005  
[hschealth.org/health-plan](http://hschealth.org/health-plan)  
(202) 467-2737

## **Housing Counseling Services**

2410 17th St., NW, Suite 100  
[housingetc.org/rental-assistance](http://housingetc.org/rental-assistance)  
(202) 667-7006

## **Jubilee Jobs**

Job Orientation  
Every Monday 8:45 am–10 am  
2419 Minnesota Ave., SE  
–OR–  
1640 Columbia Rd., NW  
[jubileejobs.org/job-seekers](http://jubileejobs.org/job-seekers)  
[bjones@jubileejobs.org](mailto:bjones@jubileejobs.org)  
(202) 667-8970

## **Little Lights Urban Ministries**

(Social services primarily focusing on children and families living in Potomac Gardens, Hopkins, and Benning Terrace public housing communities)  
760 7th St., SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
[littleglights.org](http://littleglights.org)  
(202) 548-4021

## **Martha's Table**

(Healthy Start, Food and Clothing Services)  
2375 Elvans Rd., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
[marthastable.org](http://marthastable.org)  
[info@marthastable.org](mailto:info@marthastable.org)  
(202) 328-6608

## **Mary's Center**

(Medical, Dental, Mental Health, Social Services)  
[maryscenter.org](http://maryscenter.org)  
Main Line: (202) 483-8196  
Appt. Line: (844) 796-2797  
Days and times vary by location

# APPENDIX C

## **Mary's Center**

Headquarters  
(Adams Morgan):  
2333 Ontario Rd., NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Fort Totten:  
100 Gallatin St., NE  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 483-8196

Petworth:  
3912 Georgia Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 483-8196

Bernice Fonteneau Senior  
Wellness Center:  
3531 Georgia Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 727-0338

Hatie Holmes Senior  
Wellness Center:  
324 Kennedy St., NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 291-6170

Program Office:  
4302 Georgia Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
(202) 420-7178

## **Mayor's Services**

### **Liaison Office**

(Information & Referral for  
Family Court)  
H. Carl Moultrie Courthouse  
500 Indiana Ave., NW,  
Room JM-185  
Washington, DC 20001  
[dccourts.gov/sites/default/  
files/matters-docs/MSLO-  
Description-for-Internet.pdf](http://dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/matters-docs/MSLO-Description-for-Internet.pdf)  
(202) 879-1904  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:30 am–5 pm

## **Plaza West Grandparent Housing**

(50 Apartments for  
Grandparents Raising  
Grandchildren)  
1035 4th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[Leasing@PlazaWestDC.com](mailto:Leasing@PlazaWestDC.com)  
[PlazaWestDC.com](http://PlazaWestDC.com)  
(202) 969-0103

## **Salvation Army**

(Homelessness Prevention)  
[salvationarmynca.org/how-  
we-help](http://salvationarmynca.org/how-we-help)  
(Wards 1-6)  
1434 Harvard St., NW  
(202) 332-5000  
(Wards 7-8)  
3101 MLK Jr. Ave, SE  
(202) 561-2000  
Mon–Fri. 9 am–5 pm

## **So Others Might Eat (SOME)**

(Social Services, Food,  
Housing, Jobs)  
Various DC Program Locations  
Main Office:  
71 O St., NW  
Conway Office  
4430 Benning Road, NE  
[some.org/services](http://some.org/services)  
[some@some.org](mailto:some@some.org)  
(202) 797-8806

## **THEARC**

(Social Services)  
1901 Mississippi Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
[thearcdc.org](http://thearcdc.org)  
(202) 889-5901  
Mon.–Fri.: 11 am–7 pm  
Sat.: 10 am–2 pm  
Hours vary Sun.; call ahead

## **Total Family Care Coalition**

(Family support for parents of  
children and youth with serious  
emotional disturbances)  
1214 I St., SE, Suite 11  
Washington, DC 20003  
[totalfamilycarecoalition.org](http://totalfamilycarecoalition.org)  
[TotalFamilyCareCoalition@  
gmail.com](mailto:TotalFamilyCareCoalition@gmail.com)  
(202) 249-1000  
Mon.–Fri.: 9 am–5 pm

## **United Planning Organization**

(Various social services  
and locations)  
Main Address:  
301 Rhode Island Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
[info@upo.org](mailto:info@upo.org)  
[upo.org](http://upo.org)  
(202) 238-4601

## **Virginia Williams Family Resource Center**

(Homelessness, Emergency  
Housing/Shelter, Public  
Benefits)  
920-A Rhode Island Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20018  
[dhs.dc.gov/page/homeless-  
prevention-and-diversion-  
services](http://dhs.dc.gov/page/homeless-prevention-and-diversion-services)  
(202) 525-0017 or  
(202) 312-5510  
Shelter hotline: (202) 399-7093  
or 1-800-535-7252  
Mon.–Thurs.: 8:30 am–4 pm  
Fri.: 8:30 am–12 pm



# APPENDIX C

## DC Family Success Centers

Families First DC is an initiative by Mayor Muriel Bowser focused on families in Wards 7 and 8. It's a neighborhood-based, whole family approach to provide upstream, primary prevention services and neighborhood-driven resources. The initiative aims to empower communities and families, and integrate government services and programs to build on family strengths.

### WARD 7 CENTERS:

#### **Clay Terrace Family Success Center**

Operated by Sasha Bruce  
House Youthwork  
1022 Maryland Avenue NE  
Tel: 202-546-4900  
Email: [ClayTerraceFSC@sashabruce.org](mailto:ClayTerraceFSC@sashabruce.org)

#### **Mayfair/Paradise Family Success Center (MF/PFSC)**

Operated by North Capitol Collaborative, Inc. (NCCI)  
2000 Rhode Island Avenue, NE  
Tel: 202-588-1800  
Email: [Northcapinc@north-cap.org](mailto:Northcapinc@north-cap.org)

#### **Benning Terrace/ Benning Park Family Success Centers**

Operated by the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative  
Email: [info@erfsc.org](mailto:info@erfsc.org)  
601 Fitch Street, SE, #T2  
Tel: 202-941-8547

4450 G Street, SE  
Tel: 202-257-3390

#### **Benning Rd. and Minn. Ave Family Success Centers**

Operated by the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative  
Tel: 202-870-0779  
Email: [info@erfsc.org](mailto:info@erfsc.org)  
Park 7 Family Success Center  
4020 Minnesota Avenue, NE

Ward Memorial Family Success Center  
241 42nd Street, NE  
Tel: 202-870-0779

#### **Stoddert Terrace/37th Place**

SE Family Success Center  
Operated by Life Deeds  
252 37th Place SE  
Tel: 202-575-4400  
Email: [familiesfirst@lifedeeds.org](mailto:familiesfirst@lifedeeds.org)

### WARD 8 CENTERS:

#### **Woodland Terrace Family Success Center**

Operated by Smart from the Start  
2498 Alabama Avenue, SE  
(inside Allen Chapel building)  
Tel: 202-610-2000  
Email: [layla@smartfromthestart.org](mailto:layla@smartfromthestart.org)

#### **Anacostia Family Success Center**

Operated by Martha's Table at the Commons  
2375 Elvans Rd. SE  
Tel: 202-328-6608  
Email: [info@marthastable.org](mailto:info@marthastable.org)

#### **Congress Heights Family Success Center**

Operated by Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative  
3624 Stanton Road SE (Turner Community Learning Center)  
Tel: 202-889-1425  
Email: [CongressHeightsFamilySuccessCenter@FSFSC.org](mailto:CongressHeightsFamilySuccessCenter@FSFSC.org)

#### **Bellevue Family Success Center**

Operated by Community of Hope  
Located at Community of Hope's Conway Health and Resource Center  
4 Atlantic Street, SW  
Tel: 202-407-7747 ext. 20250  
Email: [successcenter@cohdc.org](mailto:successcenter@cohdc.org)

# APPENDIX D

## DC Legal Services Organizations for Relative Caregivers

### **Ayuda**

(Immigration Law, Domestic Violence/Family Law)

[ayuda.com](http://ayuda.com)

North DC & MD Office  
6925 B Willow St., NW  
Washington, DC 20012  
(202) 387-4848

Downtown DC Office  
1413 K St., NW, 5th Fl  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 387-4848

### **Bread for the City**

(Custody, Housing, Public Benefits)

[breadforthecity.org](http://breadforthecity.org)

Southeast Center  
1700 Good Hope Rd., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 561-8587

Northwest Center  
1525 7th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 265-2400

### **Catholic Charities Civil Legal Services**

(Consumer, Debt/Bankruptcy, Financial POA, Custody, Domestic Violence, Employment, Landlord-Tenant, Public Benefits, Wills and Probate, Guardianship, Conservatorship)

924 G St., NW

Washington, DC 20001

[catholiccharitiesdc.org/legalnetwork](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/legalnetwork)

Intake hotline: (202) 350-4305 / (202) 772-4325 (En Espanol)

### **Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services**

[catholiccharitiesdc.org/ils](http://catholiccharitiesdc.org/ils)

*Consultation fee: \$80. Walk-in clients seen on a first-come, first-served basis.*

DC intake locations:

Downtown  
924 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Walk-ins: Tues. 9:30–11:30 am  
(202) 772-4352

Columbia Heights  
1618 Monroe St., NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
Walk-ins: Wed. 8:30 am  
(202) 939-2420

### **Children's Law Center**

(Custody, Health Care, Special Education)

501 3rd St., NW, 8th Floor

Washington, DC 20001

[childrenslawcenter.org](http://childrenslawcenter.org)

(202) 467-4900

# APPENDIX D

## **Christian Legal Aid of DC**

(Elder Law, Criminal Expungement, Family Law)  
907 Maryland Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
[info@christianlegalaid-dc.org](mailto:info@christianlegalaid-dc.org)  
[christianlegalaid-dc.org](http://christianlegalaid-dc.org)  
(202) 710-0592

## **D.C. Affordable Law Firm**

(Family Law, Immigration, Estate Planning)  
1717 K St., NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 844-5430  
[dcaffordablelaw.org](http://dcaffordablelaw.org)

## **D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program**

(Housing, Custody, Child Support Clinics; Advice and Referral)  
1250 H St., NW, 6th Fl.  
Washington, DC 20005  
[dcbar.org/pro-bono](http://dcbar.org/pro-bono)  
(202) 626-3499

## **DC KinCare Alliance**

(Advice, Advocacy, and Representation of Relative Caregivers)  
1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 450  
Washington DC 20036  
[info@dckincare.org](mailto:info@dckincare.org)  
[dckincare.org](http://dckincare.org)  
Helpline: (202) 505-5803

## **Family Law Assistance Network (FLAN)**

(Custody, Child Support, Divorce)  
Hotline: (202) 844-5428  
Online Request: [FLANReferrals@dcaffordablelaw.org](mailto:FLANReferrals@dcaffordablelaw.org)

## **Legal Aid Society of DC**

(Housing, Custody, Child Support, Domestic Violence, Public Benefits)  
[legalaiddc.org](http://legalaiddc.org)  
(202) 628-1161

Our Main Office — NW  
1331 H St., NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20005  
Initial interview hours:  
Mon.: 12:30 pm–6 pm  
Thurs.: 12:30 pm–4 pm

The “Big Chair” — SE  
The Anacostia Professional Building  
2041 MLK Jr. Ave., SE,  
Suite 201  
Washington, DC 20020  
Initial interview hours:  
Mon.: 10 am–1:30 pm  
Thurs.: 10 am–1:30 pm

# APPENDIX D

## **Legal Counsel For The Elderly**

(Housing, Public Benefits)  
601 E St., NW  
Washington, DC 20049  
[aarp.org/LCE](http://aarp.org/LCE)  
(202) 434-2120

## **Neighborhood Legal Services Program**

(Family Law, Housing, Public Benefits, Domestic Violence, Wills)  
[nlsp.org](http://nlsp.org)  
(202) 832-6577

Headquarters  
64 New York Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Far Northeast Office  
4609 Polk St., NE  
Washington, DC 20019

Southeast Office  
2811 Pennsylvania Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20020

## **Tahirih Justice Center**

(Immigration & Family Law for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence)  
6402 Arlington Blvd., #300  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
[tahirih.org](http://tahirih.org)  
(571) 282-6161

## **Tzedek DC**

(Legal Help with Debt, Identity Theft, and Consumer Lending)  
UDC David A. Clarke School of Law  
4340 Connecticut Ave., NW, #319  
Washington, DC 20008  
[tzedekdc.org](http://tzedekdc.org)  
(202) 274-7386

## **Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless**

(Housing, Public Benefits)  
1200 U St., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
[legalclinic.org](http://legalclinic.org)  
(202) 328-5500

## **Whitman Walker Health**

(Public Benefits, Wills, Powers of Attorney, Health Care Directives)  
[whitman-walker.org](http://whitman-walker.org)  
(202) 745-7000

Whitman-Walker At 1525  
1525 14th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Mon.–Thurs.: 8 am–8 pm  
Fri.: 8 am–6 pm

Max Robinson Center  
2301 MLK Jr. Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
Mon.–Fri.: 8 am–6 pm

Whitman-Walker WeWork  
Manhattan Laundry  
1342 Florida Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Mon.–Fri.: 8:30 am–5:30 pm

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CUSTODIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY PURSUANT TO  
D.C. CODE § 21-2301

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent of the child(ren) listed below. There are no  
Parent's name  
court orders now in effect which would prohibit me from exercising the power that I now  
seek to convey.

2. My address is:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is an adult whose address is:  
Third party's name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. I grant to \_\_\_\_\_ the parental rights and responsibilities listed below  
Third party's name  
regarding care, physical custody, and control of the following child(ren):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I grant \_\_\_\_\_ these parental rights and responsibilities regarding the  
Third party's name  
above-listed child(ren):

INITIAL THE LINE IN FRONT OF EACH POWER YOU ARE GRANTING. IF YOU DO  
NOT WISH TO GRANT A SPECIFIC POWER, DO NOT INITIAL THE LINE IN FRONT  
OF IT. YOU MAY, BUT NEED NOT, CROSS OUT EACH POWER THAT YOU DO NOT  
WISH TO GRANT.

\_\_\_ physical custody of the child(ren) listed above;  
\_\_\_ the authority to enroll the child(ren) listed above in school;  
\_\_\_ the authority to obtain educational records regarding the child(ren) listed above;  
\_\_\_ the authority to make all school-related decisions for the child(ren) listed above;  
\_\_\_ the authority to obtain medical, mental health, or dental records regarding the child(ren)  
listed above;  
\_\_\_ the authority to consent to medical, mental health, or dental treatment for the child(ren)  
listed above;  
\_\_\_ the authority to act as representative payee for any Social Security benefits for which the  
child(ren) listed above may be eligible;  
\_\_\_ the authority to receive any other benefits for which the child(ren) listed above may be  
eligible; and  
\_\_\_ all of the rights and responsibilities listed above and, to the greatest extent possible by  
law, the authority to make any other decision or obtain any other benefits necessary for the  
welfare of the child(ren) listed above.

6. This custodial power of attorney does not include authority to consent to the marriage or adoption of the child. In addition, unless otherwise agreed by the parties in writing, the custodial power of attorney granted in this form does not affect:

- A) the right of the above-listed child(ren) to inherit from his or her (their) parent;
- B) the parent’s right to visit or contact the child(ren);
- C) the parent’s right to determine the child(ren)’s religious affiliation;
- D) the parent’s responsibility to provide financial, medical, and other support for the child(ren).

7. The custodial power of attorney granted in this form is further limited by these instructions:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. As set forth in D.C. Code § 21-2301, the custodial power of attorney granted in this form does not affect my rights in any future proceeding concerning custody of or the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the child(ren) listed above.

9. The custodial power of attorney granted in this form shall take effect immediately. It shall continue to be effective even if I become disabled, incapacitated, or incompetent.

10. The custodial power of attorney granted in this form shall continue until I revoke it in writing and notify \_\_\_\_\_ in writing of my revocation.  
Third party’s name

11. A person or entity that relies on this custodial power of attorney in good faith has no obligation to make any further inquiry or investigation into the authority of the attorney to act as described in this document. Revocation of this custodial power of attorney is not effective as to a person or entity that relies on it in good faith until that person or entity learns of the revocation.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent’s Signature)

District of Columbia  
This document was acknowledged before me on

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date) by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of parent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of notarial officer)

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_



## Other Primary Caregiver (OPC) Form – 2021-22 School Year

Use this form to verify that the enrolling student is under the care of "Other Primary Caregiver." School officials should only collect this form if the person enrolling the student is *NOT* the parent, legal guardian, or court appointed custodian of the student and whose parent, custodian, or guardian is unable to supply such care and support due to serious family hardship.

### Step One: Determine if you are an Other Primary Caregiver.

An "Other Primary Caregiver" is a person other than a parent or court-appointed custodian or guardian who is the primary provider of care or control and support to a student who resides with him or her, and whose parent, custodian, or guardian is unable to supply such care and support due to serious family hardship. Other Primary Caregivers must establish DC residency as required on the DC Residency Verification Form, in addition to establishing his/her status as an "Other Primary Caregiver." See reverse for definition of care or control and substantial support.

### Step Two: Provide information about your Other Primary Caregiver status.

Student First Name:	Student Last Name:	
OPC First Name:	OPC Last Name:	
OPC Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Relationship to enrolling student:	Date student started residing with OPC:	
Verify Other Primary Caregiver status (check any that apply):		
<input type="checkbox"/> I provide care or control for the enrolling student		
<input type="checkbox"/> I provide substantial support for the enrolling student		
<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolling student resides with me, the other primary caregiver		

### Step Three: Provide information about the parent/legal guardian.

Full Name of Parent/Legal Guardian:			
Address of Parent/Legal Guardian:			
City:	State:	ZIP:	Phone:
The parent or legal guardian is unable to provide primary care and substantial support because of the following serious family hardship (check any that apply):			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she has an active military assignment			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she is incarcerated			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she suffers from a serious illness			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she does not live with the child due to neglect and/or abuse			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she is deceased			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she has abandoned the child			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she is experiencing loss of habitability			
<input type="checkbox"/> he/she is unavailable due to deportation			

### Step Four: Confirmation of Other Primary Caregiver Status.

By signing below, I swear and attest that I am the Other Primary Caregiver and the parent, custodian, or guardian is unable to supply such care and support because of a **serious family hardship**. I further accept that all provisions set forth in "Step Three: Certification of Residency Requirements" on the DC Residency Verification Form are incorporated and merged herein.

Other Primary Caregiver SIGN HERE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### SCHOOL OFFICIAL USE ONLY Complete the area below to confirm school verification of other primary caregiver status.

I reviewed the Other Primary Caregiver status as specified above and the OPC meets all three criteria and that the parent or legal guardian is unable to provide primary care and substantial support due to serious family hardship. In addition, the above identified Other Primary Caregiver provided one of the following documents to verify OPC status:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sworn Statement                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpired official documentation from the federal government or the Government of the District of Columbia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Records from the previous school year | <input type="checkbox"/> Attestation for Other Primary Caregiver  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immunization or medical records       |   |

I certify, under the penalties of perjury, that I have personally reviewed all the documents presented and affirm that the information represented above is true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. I also affirm that all supporting documentation to this form will be retained by the school and made available to OSSE, external auditors, and other agencies, including but not limited to, the DC Office of the Inspector General and the DC Office of the Attorney General, upon request.

School Official Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Primary Caregiver must submit one of the documents identified below to verify the other primary caregiver status.**

<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A completed and signed sworn statement</b> indicating that he/she is the primary caregiver for the student.</li> <li>• <b>Records from the previous school year</b> indicating that the student is in the care of the caregiver, including, but not limited to, a signed report card.</li> <li>• <b>Immunization or medical records</b> issued within the last 12 months immediately preceding the school's review of the residency documentation, indicating that the student is in the care of the caregiver.</li> <li>• <b>Unexpired official documentation from the federal government or the Government of the District of Columbia</b> with an issue date within the last 12 months immediately preceding the school's review of residency documentation, indicating that the caregiver receives public or medical benefits on behalf of the student, including, but not limited to, Supplemental Security Income annual benefits notification or TANF verification of income notice or recertification approval letter.</li> <li>• <b>An attestation for Other Primary Caregiver completed and signed by a legal, medical or social service professional</b> attesting to the caregiver's status relevant to the student and issued within the last 12 months immediately preceding the school's review of residency documentation.</li> </ul>
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**Am I an Other Primary Caregiver?**

5-A DCMR § 5099 states that an Other Primary Caregiver (OPC) is a person, other than the enrolling student's parent or court appointed custodian or guardian. The enrolling student must *reside* with the OPC and the OPC *must provide the student with guidance, maintenance, physical care and support*. In addition, **the student's parents, guardians, or custodians are unable to provide the student primary care and substantial support due to serious family hardship**. If you do not provide guidance, maintenance, and physical care, and the student's parents, guardians, or custodians do not suffer from a serious family hardship, you do not qualify as an Other Primary Caregiver. Do you provide the following items in the table below?

<b>Support</b>	When the OPC is exercising <i>primary</i> responsibility to provide the child with financial resources for the child's livelihood.
<b>Guidance</b>	When the OPC participates in the responsibility for the child's development on a daily basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending school conferences</li> <li>• Disciplining the child</li> <li>• Participating in decisions concerning the child's well-being</li> <li>• Involvement in the child's extracurricular activities</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	When the OPC is providing necessities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Clothing</li> <li>• Shelter</li> </ul>
<b>Physical care</b>	When the OPC is providing continuous care for the child by performing tasks required in the child's daily life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathing</li> <li>• Feeding</li> <li>• Dressing</li> <li>• Assuring medical attention will be received by the child</li> <li>• Preparing meals</li> <li>• Supervising the child's activities</li> <li>• Assisting with other physical care needs</li> </ul>



Thank you for stepping up  
to raise a D.C. child in need.  
We hope this Guide has been helpful  
to you in finding the best options and  
supports for your family.

*The material contained in this Guide is for informational purposes only. It does not provide legal advice nor create an attorney-client relationship. You should contact an attorney to obtain legal advice with respect to any particular issue or problem. The information provided in this Guide is current only as the date of publication. While we make every effort to provide complete and accurate information, we make no representation about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information contained in or linked to this Guide. This Guide is published by the DC KinCare Alliance, and any non-public information contained herein can only be reproduced with permission.*

