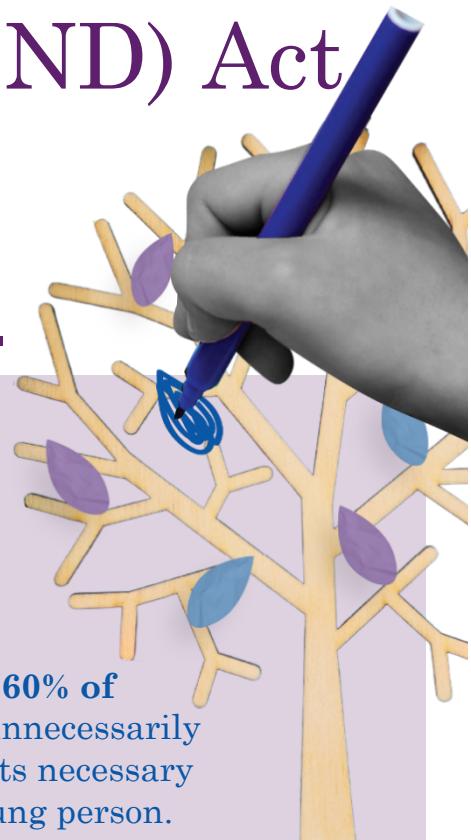


# Kinship in Demand (KIND) Act

The KIND Act (P.A. 103-1061) reinforces the Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS') obligation to deliver services using a kin-first approach --- engaging relatives and prioritizing placement of youth with relatives --- and directs courts to provide oversight for DCFS' obligations to maintain and strengthen the connections youth in care have with family.



## Why the KIND Act matters

Placing youth with relatives lessens trauma of family separation, reduces the number of times a child is moved, enhances permanency options if youth cannot be reunified, results in higher placement satisfaction for youth in care, and delivers better social, behavioral, mental health, and educational outcomes for youth than when they are placed in non-kin foster care.



Before the **KIND Act**, over 60% of relative caregivers were unnecessarily denied the foster care benefits necessary to care for and nurture a young person.

DCFS places the majority of youth in the care of relatives, but relative placements need to be made possible for more youth. Before the KIND Act, relative caregivers had been denied the same level of resources as foster parents are provided because Illinois law required relatives to meet complex standards designed decades ago for foster care licensing. New federal rules – and the provisions of the KIND Act – allow DCFS to apply commonsense standards to certify relatives to care for youth and provide financial supports like foster parents receive as of July 1, 2025.

## What the KIND Act does:

### ✓ Improves Supports for Relatives Caring for DCFS-Involved Youth

The KIND Act provides equitable supports for kinship care and guardianship benefits to improve outcomes for DCFS-involved youth, as well as increase the capacity of relatives to become caregivers delivering permanency for more youth.

- Amended the Children and Family Services Act to: require DCFS to pursue federal funding opportunities to establish a kinship navigator program to assist relative caregivers involved with DCFS; strengthen DCFS' obligations to engage in family finding efforts to promote a youth's relational permanence; and, improve services and financial supports to assist relatives in becoming caregivers and subsidized guardians, including assistance with reasonable expenditures needed to prepare relative homes to meet the standards for a "certified relative caregiver home" and provides post-placement supports to kinship guardians to promote youth stability in relative placements similar to supports provided to adoptive families.
- Amended the Child Care Act and the Children and Family Services Act to remove barriers to equitable financial supports for kinship caregivers by statutorily defining standards for a "certified relative caregiver home" that are no more restrictive than the best practice recommendations developed by national child welfare groups to guide implementation of the new federal regulations. These changes allow Illinois to maximize access to federal matching funds to provide many more relative caregivers with enhanced supports and also make more relatives eligible for subsidized guardianship for timely permanency.

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- Amended the Juvenile Court Act to remove barriers to permanent guardianship as an alternative to adoption as the permanency goal when reunification is not viable. This much needed change improves DCFS' ability to comply with the [BH consent decree](#) and leverage federally-funded guardianship subsidies.

✓ **Enhances Court Oversight and System Accountability**

- Amended the Juvenile Court Act to provide enhanced court oversight for family-finding efforts designed to ensure youth have long-term connections with their relatives and promote the voices of youth and their family members in permanency planning.
- Increases transparency by requiring DCFS to release public data regarding relative care and provide relatives with a process to appeal DCFS' decisions as well as requiring the Auditor General to evaluate DCFS' progress implementing the requirements of the KIND Act.

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## More about the KIND Act

On **February 5, 2025**, Governor Pritzker signed the KIND Act into law.

Some provisions of the KIND Act were effective immediately, but most provisions went into effect July 1, 2025. In June, the Illinois Joint Committee on Administrative Rules granted DCFS the ability to finalize its proposed administrative rule (89 IAC 415) for implementation of the KIND Act's July 1, 2025 provisions pertaining to **relative caregiver home certification and family-finding**. Notice of final rule adoption occurred July 18, 2025.

- The KIND Act, HB 4781, was sponsored by [Rep. Marcus Evans](#) and [Sen. Mattie Hunter](#).
- View Governor Pritzker's bill signing press conference [here](#).
- View the **Kinship in Demand (KIND) Act/Public Act 103-1061** [here](#).
- View the **ACLU of Illinois webpage** about the KIND Act [here](#).
- View the **federal rule** (88 FR 66700) Illinois is leveraging to establish relative caregiver certification standards required by the KIND Act [here](#).
- View **DCFS Rule 415** (89 IAC 415) – implementing KIND Act [here](#).

