



2023 GRANDFAMILIES STIPEND PROGRAM

KINSHIP FUND FOR INFORMAL CAREGIVERS

DATA IMPACT REPORT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Grandfamilies Stipend Support Program was made possible by the contributions of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Office of Area Agency on Aging. Through this endeavor, eligible informal kinship caregivers who do not receive support through child welfare programs had an opportunity to receive a one-time financial stipend to care for their kin.

A Second Chance, Inc. (ASCI) is extremely grateful for the partnership that helped to support **901 Allegheny County families** in this manner. For more information about ASCI and other supports we provide formal and informal kinship families, visit www.asecondchance-kinship.com.





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FORWARD

From Dr. Sharon L. McDaniel

Founder, President, and CEO of A Second Chance, Inc.

ASCI's value for family has been our guide and North Star in providing families with what they need to thrive. For over 29 years, we have been afforded the opportunity to ensure the needs of kinship families are prioritized by providing an array of holistic, values-based services catering specifically to the triad.

Often, child welfare systems focus on the parents, child, and caregiver independently; however, in kinship care, the entire kinship triad—child/youth, birth family and caregiver—must be served collectively.

In the kinship triad, each member is an integral part of the whole, maintaining balance and stability. Unfortunately, informal caregivers oftentimes go unnoticed as part of this foundation. Further, grandparents raising grandchildren are among the most common type of kinship caregiver — whether formal or informal — and receive minimal support to care for their families.

Seeing this gap in service, ASCI, alongside the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Area Agency on Aging, took action to fill the gaps for grandfamilies who need extra support.



As this report will show, our joint initiative impacted 901 families in Allegheny County who are raising their kin outside of the child welfare system. The one-time \$1,000 payment to eligible families proved to have a significant impact on those served and further demonstrates the power of kinship.

Grandfamilies have long been the pillar of kinship and as we remain accountable to the families we serve, we also remain dedicated to serving informal kinship families, and are grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to do so impactfully. We are hopeful that this Kinship Fund for Informal Caregivers (KFIC) can become a mainstay in the kinship care ecosystem as we move forward.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Allegheny County Department of Human Services and A Second Chance, Inc. launched a Grandfamilies stipend program from April 28 – June 30, 2023. This program assisted in providing caregivers outside of the child welfare system with much-needed resources. This type of strategy is consistent with an upstream approach that we learned works in marginalized communities during a crisis such as COVID. Early and effective tangible support will aid in kin families being diverted from the child welfare system and provide the necessary community pathways to support informal caregivers long-term.

Through the Grandfamilies stipend program, 901 families were able to receive a one-time stipend of \$1,000 to aid in addressing the immediate needs of their families. As the report will show, many of the caregivers are on a fixed income and most eligible caregivers were representative of the following demographics:

- Biological Grandparents
- Black/African American
- 60 years of age or over
- Not Married
- Renting



A KINSHIP STORY

A feel-good kinship story highlighting the power of kinship

ASCI heard directly from grandparents who were supported through the stipend program and who shared the impact it had on their families.

We've heard the saying, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." ASCI believes, however, that the apple's location is the reason why kinship care is successful; the family is present. It is not only the most immediate resource, but it is also the best resource for children needing out-of-home support.

Kinship care is a traditional means of keeping family together where families do what comes naturally to them; step up to support one another. This may often come in the form of an aunt or uncle stepping up to help their niece or nephew, or even an older sibling who steps up to help their brother or sister. Most often, we see kinship care through grandparents who make countless sacrifices to support their grandchildren. Grandparents raising grandchildren are among the most common type of kinship caregiver, and historically receive minimal support to care for their families adequately. While these selfless acts of helping family benefit the entire triad – the child, caregiver, and birth parents – they come at a cost, and most families need extra support whether through formal or informal means.

Informal kinship care refers to a living arrangement in which a relative of a child, who is not in the care, custody, or guardianship of the child welfare system, provides for the care and custody of a child who needs out-of-home support. Recognizing the gaps in service for informal kinship caregivers in Allegheny County, ASCI, in partnership with Allegheny County DHS/ Office of Area Agency on Aging, launched a Grandfamilies Stipend Support Program which served 901 families and provided support for older adults who care for children under the age of 18. Through this endeavor, informal kinship caregivers had the opportunity to receive a one-time financial stipend to care for their kin.

For informal kinship caregivers, Melanie Hurvey **name changed for confidentiality**, Mary Collier, and Debra Hall, the support provided through this program gave them a sense of value that oftentimes gets overlooked as grandparents stepping in to raise their grandchildren.

Ten years ago, Collier opened her home to her grandchild as a full-time informal caregiver after her granddaughter's birth parents became incarcerated. With the help of her granddaughter's maternal grandmother as well as Collier's biological family and friends, she has been able to ensure her granddaughter is fully supported without interruptions or inconveniences.

My family, friends, and church family have supported me by babysitting, buying her clothes when needed, taking her out sometimes," Collier expressed. "They help me when I need it."



For Collier, the stipend came just in time to help her with her granddaughter's summer needs. "[This program] was beneficial to me because I can peacefully afford her summer clothes, transportation, and summer activities," she shared.

Since 2019, Debra Hall has taken care of her grandson to ensure their family remains whole.

Hall shares, "I just don't think kids should be separated from family like that. [Especially if] someone in the family could help them because you never know what help is available if that is a concern, just like this program helped me."

Through the program, Hall was able to afford to pay for everyday essentials and household bills.

"[The stipend] was beneficial because I could pay a couple of bills and buy some food. It was really helpful," she continued. "I purchased a couple of outfits for my grandson. Overall, I was just shocked, and I really appreciated it."

For Melanie Hurvey and her husband, taking care of their granddaughter was their main obligation. Throughout her being in their care, Hurvey shares that her family made it possible to navigate this journey. Before passing away, Hurvey's mother played a huge role in caring for her great-granddaughter.

Other family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins have been extremely instrumental by taking charge whenever Hurvey and her husband need added help. She stresses the fact that she does not have full custody of her granddaughter, rather, she is helping her son until he can be his best self.

While Hurvey shares that the stipend provided much-needed support, love is what ultimately keeps their family strong. "It's all about love for us," she shares. "It's really not about any type of monetary [attributes], it's just about love."

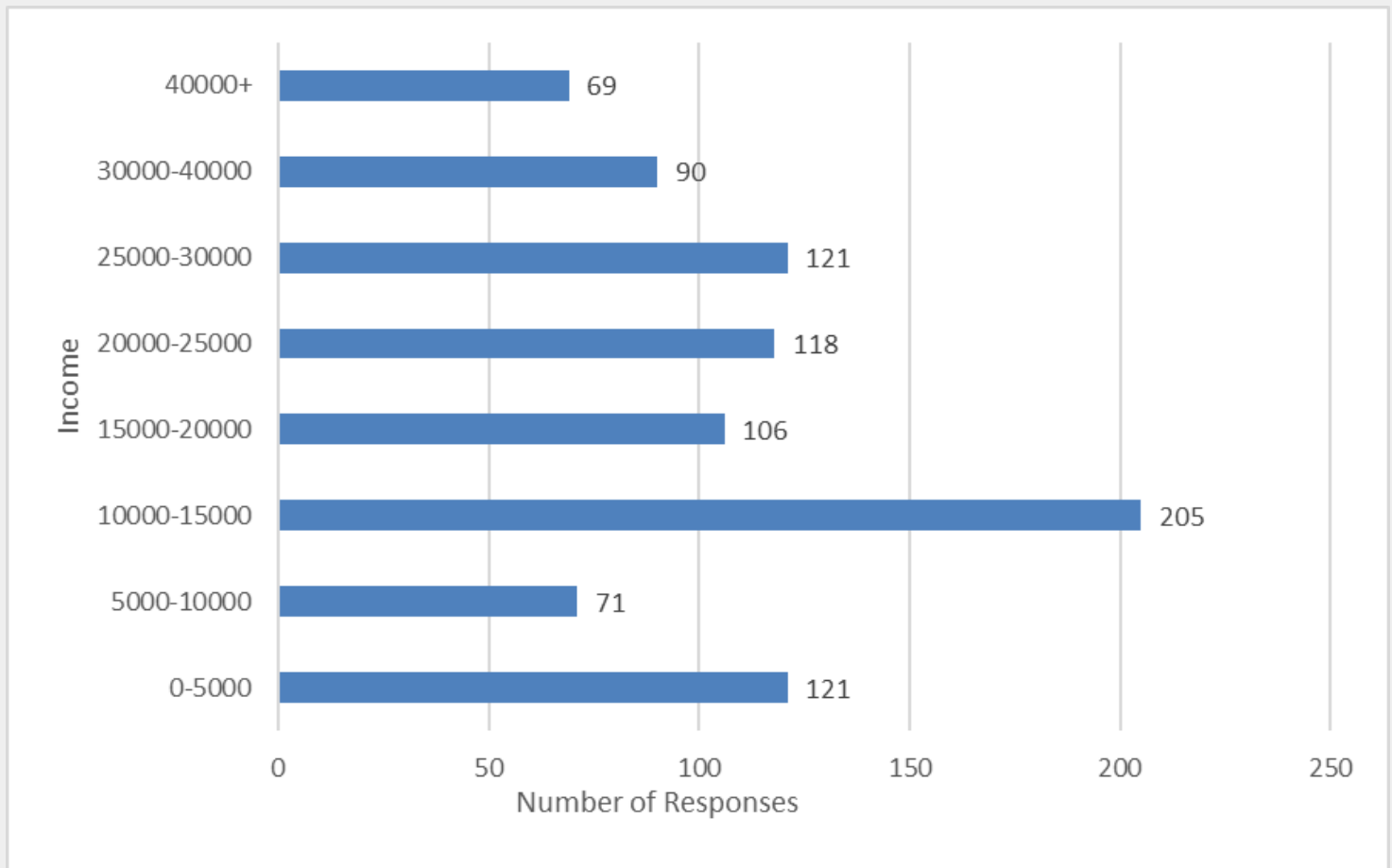
It is important that all caregivers, whether formal or informal, understand how imperative it is to know that they are not alone and there are resources that are available to them. ASCI is thankful to have partnered with the Allegheny County DHS/ Office of Area Agency on Aging to extend our support to families in need.



KEY FINDINGS

CAREGIVER ANNUAL INCOME

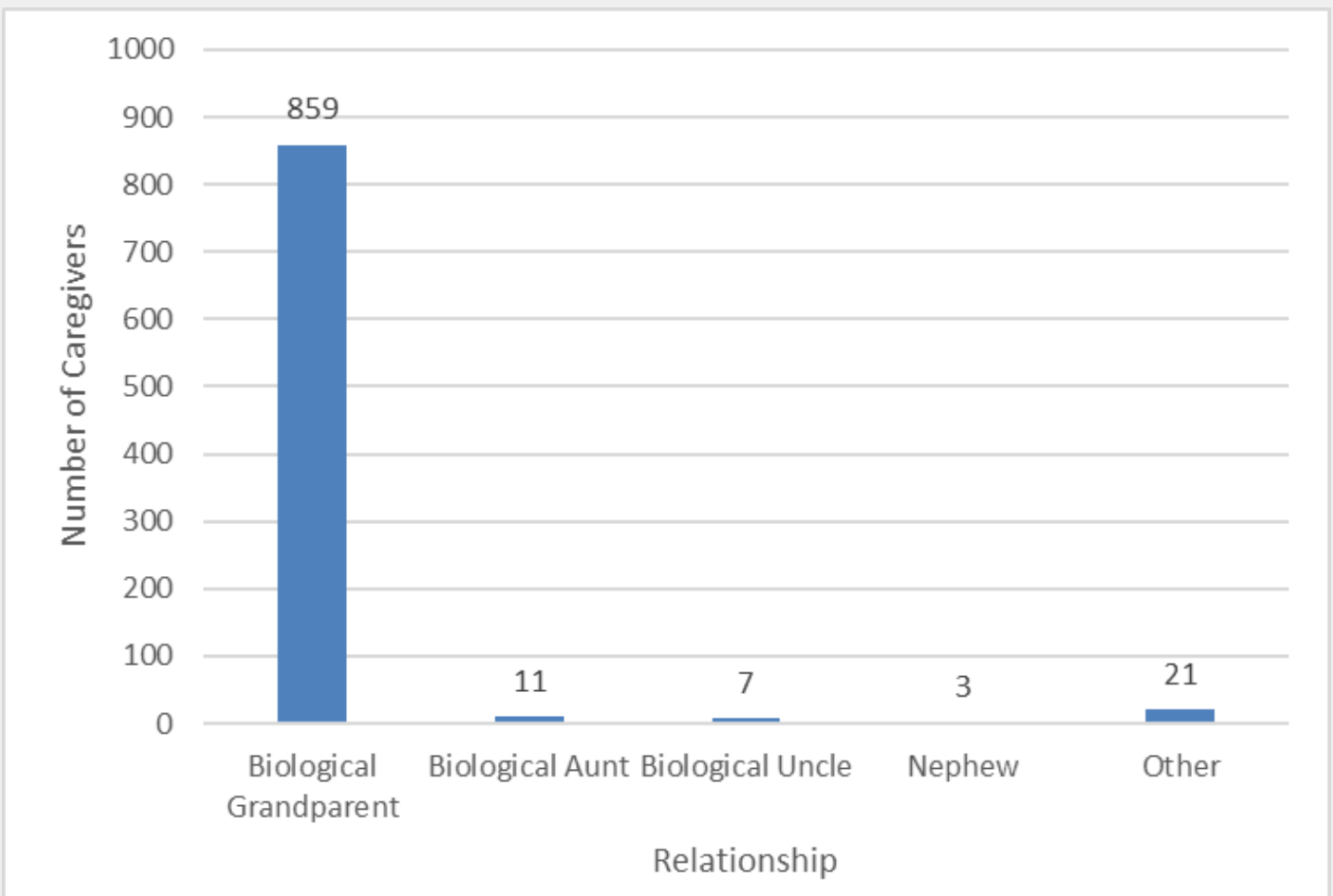
Out of the 901 caregivers, 397 (44%) have an income of 0-\$15,000 yearly. Understanding most of the caregivers that received the stipend were grandparents on a fixed income; this supports the need for policy changes and offers informal kinship caregivers financial assistance beyond Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Additionally, the caregivers were not aware of the Department of Human Services Area on Aging Agency services they can inquire about and determine their eligibility.



KEY FINDINGS

CAREGIVER RELATION TO YOUTH

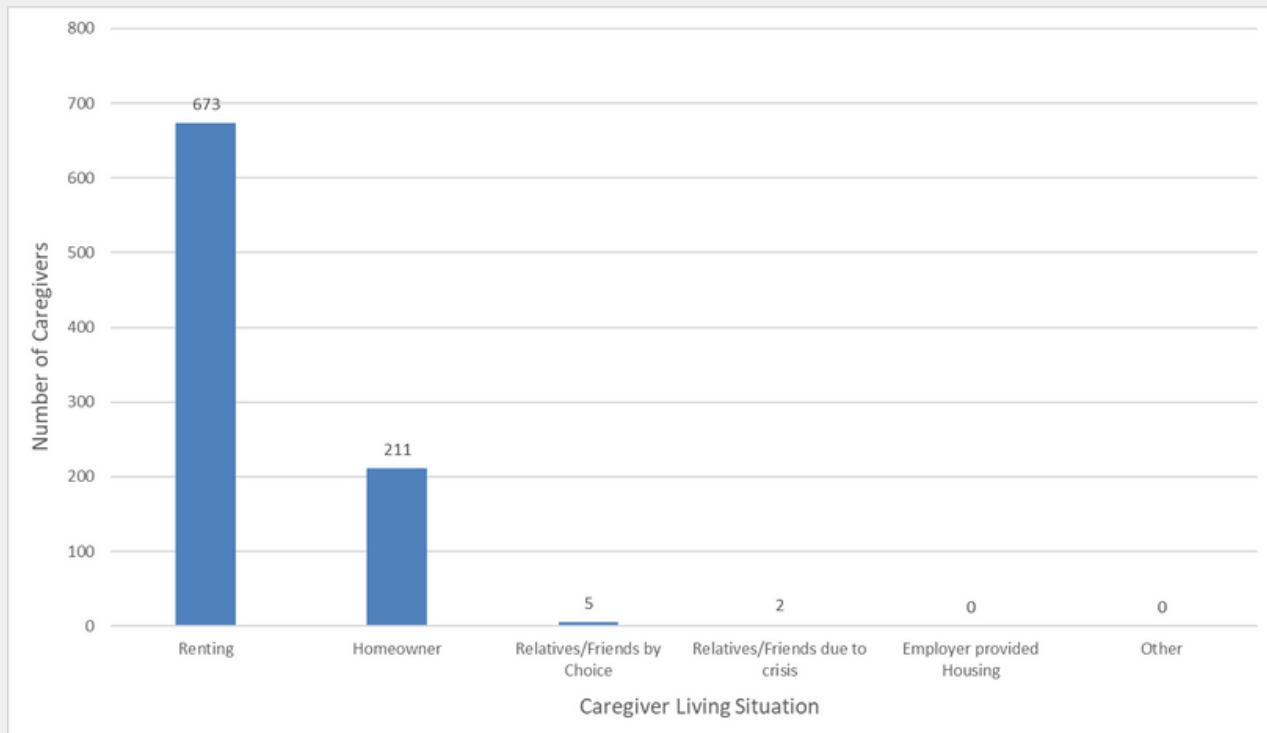
In the United States, an estimated 2.7 million grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Further, 17% of grandfamilies have incomes below the poverty line, and age 50 is the average age of becoming a first-time grandparent.¹ Of those caregivers receiving the Grandfamilies stipend, 95% are grandparents taking care of their grandchild(ren) while others reported other kinship relation such as a biological aunt/uncle or having close connection to the child/youth through a fictive kin relation.



KEY FINDINGS

CAREGIVER LIVING SITUATION

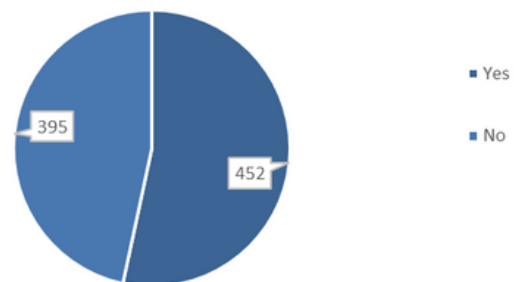
Multigenerational households with three or more generations has nearly quadrupled over the past decade, increasing 271 percent from 2011 to 2021.² Out of 891 responses of those caregivers who elected to share their living situation, 76% reported being renters, while 24% were homeowners.



To enhance the functionality of the caregiver's home with the number of people residing in the home, 53% of the caregivers shared remodeling their bathroom and kitchen would be beneficial to the operation of the home.

Would a second bathroom or a kitchen upgrade improve the function of your living space for you and the youth living in the home?

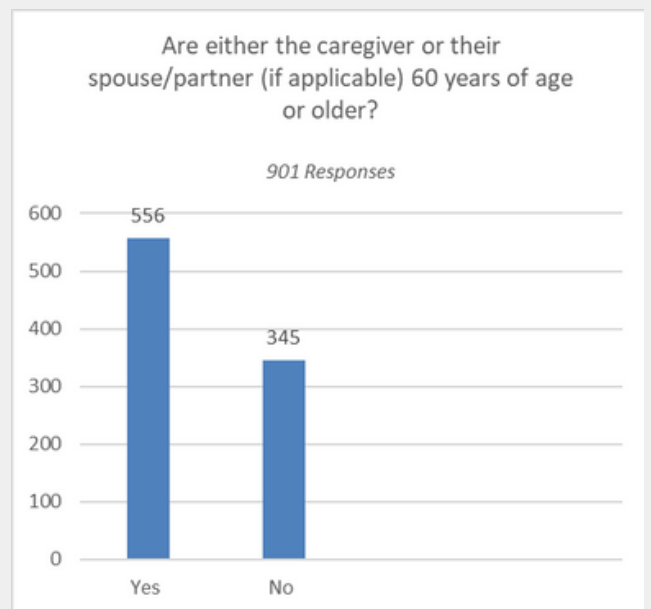
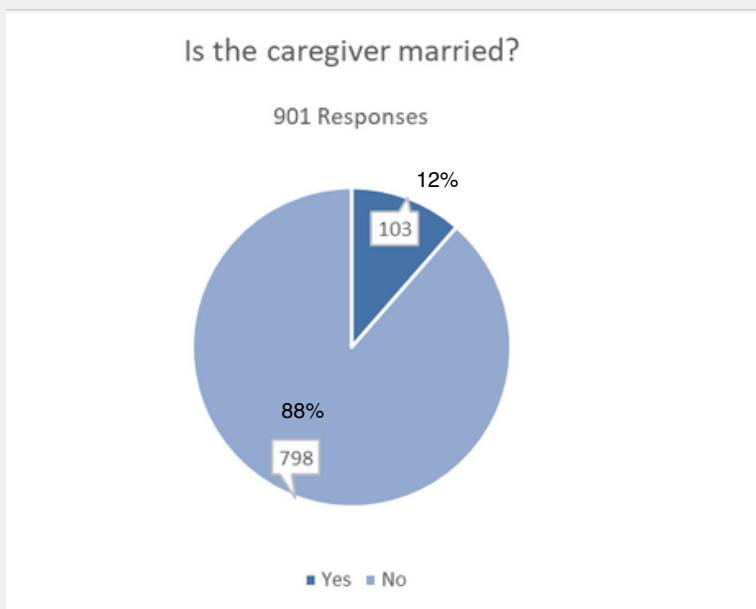
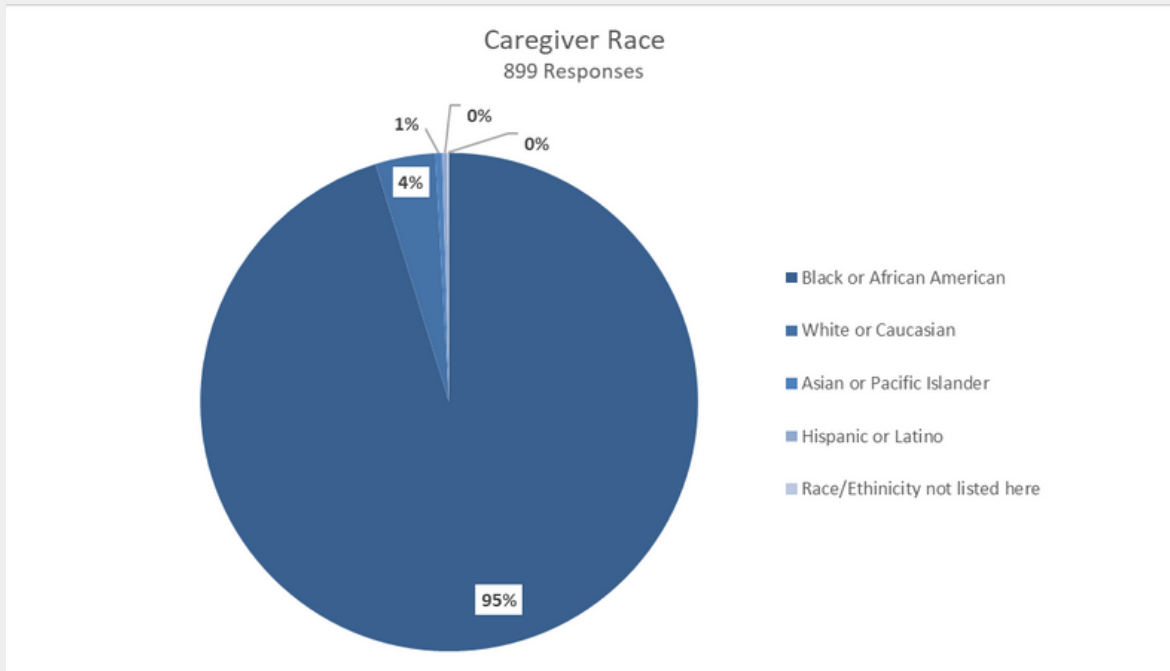
847 Responses



KEY FINDINGS

CAREGIVER DEMOGRAPHICS

Most of the caregivers who were eligible for the stipend were African American (95%), 88% were not married, and 556 (62%) of caregivers were or their spouses were 60 years of age or older.



GRANDPARENT VOICES

Caregivers shared how the resources provided through the stipend program will allow them the ability to register their kinship youth to participate in summer camps and purchase summer clothing. Others have shared about experiencing financial hardship and how the stipend allowed them to bring delinquent bills current.

Mary Collier

RECIPIENT OF INFORMAL GRANDFAMILIES AND KINSHIP CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICE

[THIS PROGRAM] WAS BENEFICIAL TO ME BECAUSE I CAN PEACEFULLY AFFORD HER SUMMER CLOTHES, TRANSPORTATION, AND SUMMER ACTIVITIES.



Debra Hall

RECIPIENT OF INFORMAL GRANDFAMILIES AND KINSHIP CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICE

IT'S BEEN BENEFICIAL BECAUSE I COULD PAY A COUPLE OF BILLS AND BUY SOME FOOD. IT WAS REALLY HELPFUL. I PURCHASED A COUPLE OUTFITS FOR MY GRANDSON. OVERALL, I WAS JUST SHOCKED, AND I REALLY APPRECIATED IT.



THIS MONEY ALLOWED ME TO COMFORTABLY BUY GROCERIES FOR MY HOUSEHOLD. IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE AND I WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE A LITTLE EXTRA FOR MY GRANDDAUGHTER.

-ANONYMOUS CAREGIVER

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

This collaboration aided in providing insightful qualitative and quantitative information about one of our most vulnerable populations. We successfully met our goal to process support payments for kinship families in a matter of five weeks, thus, meeting the June 30, 2023 deadline that was set. Further, the information gathered will be used to inform future, critical work to support kinship grandfamilies, both formal and informal, as we have gleaned from their shared lived experience to identify further service gaps. The following recommendations will be considered for future research and execution:

- A more in-depth exploration of the multigenerational household data will be beneficial to better understand the family make-up and immediate needs within those living in the house.
- Expanding our demographical data to identify those in the "other" categories will aid in our understanding of other kinship families needs of support and how to reach them.
- Obtaining deeper qualitative information from more families.
- The creation of a more strategic data collection method is being explored for future projects working specifically with older Americans and grandfamilies to ensure they have minimal barriers to submitting information.

REFERENCES

1. Turner, T. (2023, July 6). Taking Care of Yourself While Raising Your Grandchildren. RetireGuide.com. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://www.retireguide.com/guides/self-care-raising-grandchildren/>
2. Multigenerational households are on the rise and here to stay. (2021). <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2021/04/21-MG-Family-Report-FactSheet.pdf>





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