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**Arkansas DHS Awarded Grant Aimed at Helping Relatives Raising Children in Foster Care**

*Award to assist kin in finding and using programs and services to meet needs of children they are raising*

(LITTLE ROCK, AR) – The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has been awarded a \$295,544 grant to fund programs that will help grandparents and other relatives raising children in foster care.

“We are excited about this new opportunity to expand our efforts to help grandparents and other family members caring for their relatives in foster care,” said Mischa Martin, DCFS Director. “Research has shown, and we know from our own experiences here in Arkansas, that there are many benefits to placing children with relatives, including increased stability and safety, as well as the ability to maintain family connections and cultural traditions.”

The division plans to use the funds to hire staff to work directly with families and relatives, taking a team approach to finding safety and stability for children and families. This funding opportunity comes from the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018.

“As parents struggle with issues that affect their ability to safely and appropriately parent their children, it is important for state agencies like ours to develop resources to support kinship caregivers,” said DHS Deputy Director Keesa Smith. “There are significant supports available and this grant will help us help families learn about, find, and use programs and services to meet their needs and the needs of the children they are raising. I’m thrilled that our staff at DCFS will now have this special opportunity to build upon their efforts in this area.”

Contact DCFS Public Information Specialist Keith Metz at [keith.metz@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:keith.metz@dhs.arkansas.gov) or 501-683-2040 with questions about the initiative.