

A bill for an act
relating to human services; establishing the kinship support program;
appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes,
chapter 256J.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[256J.576] KINSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** (a) There is established a kinship support program.
The commissioner of human services, in collaboration with the Minnesota Kinship
Caregivers Association, shall design a child-specific kinship support program so that
children living with kinship caregivers are categorically eligible to receive MFIP benefits
under this chapter, and basic needs grants under this section.

Subd. 2. **Eligibility.** (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the
commissioner shall not deny MFIP benefits under this chapter to a child meeting the
requirements of this subdivision.

(b) A child living with a kinship caregiver, without the child's parent, is categorically
eligible for MFIP benefits regardless of:

- (1) the kinship caregiver's income;
- (2) the kinship caregiver's access to child support for the child; or
- (3) any public assistance the child or the kinship caregiver receives due to other
special needs of the child.

(c) A child meeting the requirements of paragraph (b) is categorically eligible to
receive benefits from birth to age 18, except a child shall continue to receive benefits under
this section indefinitely and without interruption past age 18 so long as:

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(1) the child is enrolled in an institution of higher education as defined in section 136.28, subdivision 6; or

(2) the child receives Social Security benefits due to a disability.

(d) Benefits under this section shall cease if the child is returned to the care of a parent; however, benefits must follow the child and continue uninterrupted if the child is transferred to another kinship caregiver.

(e) For purposes of this section, "kinship caregiver" means a child's great-grandparent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, sibling, step-great-grandparent, step-grandparent, step-aunt, step-uncle, step-cousin, step-sibling, or a person meeting the definition of de facto custodian under section 257C.01, subdivision 2.

Subd. 3. **Requirements.** The kinship support program is a preventative subsidy that must comply with the following requirements:

(1) in addition to MFIP assistance under this chapter, additional TANF or maintenance of effort funds must be made available to provide children under this section grants for basic needs including, but not limited to, school-related fees, respite care, a yearly clothing allowance, home repairs, and transportation needs;

(2) the commissioner shall design and carry out a strategy to provide assistance through the application process to assist families under this program in finding other available public assistance that may be available to the child including, but not limited to, Social Security benefits, waived services, child care, respite care, and tutoring; and

(3) the commissioner shall provide applicants to this program with a streamlined MFIP application form which clearly identifies required information relative to the child only.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 2. APPROPRIATION.

\$..... is appropriated in fiscal year 2009 from the general fund to the commissioner of human services for the kinship support program under Minnesota Statutes, section 256J.576.