



# FAQs

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## The Close Relative Caregiver Pilot Program: What You Need to Know

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The Close Relative Caregiver Program (CRCP) helps low-income District residents who are raising their siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins, and godchildren. Those who qualify may get money every month to help care for children living with them. These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) outline some key practice requirements of the program.



### ***Do I need legal custody to qualify for the program?***

You are not required to have legal custody of the child, but you must prove that you are the child's primary caregiver. There are two ways you can do this:

The first way is to provide one of the following documents:

- A court order, signed by a judge, granting you custody of the child; or
- A court order, signed by a judge, granting you standby guardianship of the child, pursuant to D.C. Code §§ 16-4801–4810; or
- A decree, signed by a judge, stating that you have adopted the child.

Or, if none of the above exist, then you can complete the checklist contained on the [application form](#) which indicates why the parents are unable to care for the child(ren), and also provide one of the following alternative pieces of evidence to confirm for us your caregiver status with the child:

- Records showing that the applicant enrolled the child in school during the most recent school year or that the applicant is the primary educational contact for the child; or
- Immunizations or medical records, no more than two years old, indicating that the applicant is tending to the child's medical needs; or
- Proof that the applicant has been receiving SSI or TANF for the child; or
- A notarized letter from any legal, medical, military, law enforcement, social service or other similar professional, or the applicant's landlord describing the applicant's status in caring for the child.

### ***I've adopted my sibling, niece, nephew, cousin, or godchild or I am a legal guardian, am I still eligible?***

Yes, as long as you are not receiving an adoption or guardianship subsidy for the child. Please provide us with a copy of your adoption or guardianship court order.



### ***The child's parent lives in my home. Am I still eligible?***

You remain eligible under certain circumstances. The parent may continue to reside in your home if you have a court order granting you standby guardianship of the children, or if the parent is a minor (under 21 years old) who is enrolled in school or the parent has a medically verifiable disability that prevents them from caring for the child. Please provide us with documentation to establish these.

### ***I don't live in the District of Columbia, am I eligible?***

You may be eligible for the CRCP if you live outside the District if one of the following is true:

- The child has lived in DC for the 6 months prior to your application for subsidy payments and the child's parent lived in DC when you filed your application for subsidy payments; or
- The child has lived in DC for the 6 months prior to your application for subsidy payments, the child is currently enrolled in school in the District, and the child's parent have a disability that prevent them from caring for the child, regardless of where the parent lives.

You will need to become a resident of the District of Columbia within 1 year of receiving subsidy payments to continue receiving the subsidy.

### ***I'm the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle, am I still eligible?***

You are not eligible for the CRCP, but you may qualify under the Grandparent Caregivers Program. You will be required to prove your relationship to the child. Please see the [Grandparent Caregivers Program Frequently Asked Questions](#) for further information.

### ***How do I prove that I am the child's sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin?***

You prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, adoption decrees, paternity acknowledgements, child support agreements, certified DNA test results, or court orders. For example, if you are the child's aunt or uncle (sibling of one of the child's parents) you can provide the child's birth certificate, your birth certificate, and the birth certificate of the child's parent to whom you are related.

### ***Who is considered a godparent?***

A "godparent" is an individual with close personal or emotional ties with the child or the child's family that pre-date the child's placement with the individual.

### ***Why do I need a criminal background check?***

ALL adults (anyone 18 years or older) in the house must comply with a local criminal history check and a federal background check. This is a program requirement and helps to ensure a suitable environment, including the health, safety, and welfare for the children in the household being considered for a subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified because you or someone in your home has a criminal record. CFSA reviews every case individually and takes into account the entire situation; this includes how long ago the conviction occurred, the type of conviction, and the circumstances surrounding it.

We conduct the criminal background checks at our offices. The adults in your home must schedule an appointment to come to our offices for fingerprinting. There is no cost to you for fingerprinting.

### ***What is the Child Protection Register Check and why do I need it?***

The child protection register is our database of those persons responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. All adults in the house (everyone 18 years or older) are required to complete a child protection register check so we can ensure the safety of the children in households receiving the subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified if you are listed in the registry. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis.

Included with your application packet is a Child Protection Register form. Each adult living in the house must complete and sign his or her own form and have it notarized or witnessed by CFSA staff. We will be happy to witness your signature when you come for fingerprinting.

***I've been told I cannot get TANF for the children because I get SSI. Am I still eligible?***

Yes. It is important to note that you only must APPLY for TANF. If TANF denies you because you currently receive SSI, you may still be eligible for the CRCP.

***I'd like to go over my application with someone before I submit it. Can someone review it for me?***

Yes. We would be happy to go over your application to make sure it is complete. In order to facilitate this, please call 1-866-FAMKIN1.

***Will I continue to get TANF or SSI if I am awarded this subsidy?***

Yes, a CRCP subsidy is in addition to the benefits you already receive. The amount of a subsidy you receive from the CRCP is based on how much TANF or SSI you already receive from the government for the child.

***How long does the application process take?***

Applicants who have submitted all necessary documentation on average can complete the intake process within 45 days. However, there are times when documentation may be difficult to locate and submit, when this occurs it can delay the intake process up to 45 days.

***What happens after I am approved?***

After you are approved we will make arrangements for you to review and sign a subsidy agreement. Once you sign the subsidy agreement your case will become active and you will get a debit card. The subsidy is NOT retroactive to the date you first submitted your application.

***Is there a waiting list for the program?***

The CRCP throughout the year may or may not have a waiting list. For more information please contact us at the phone or email address listed below.

***Can I have the subsidy directly deposited into my bank account?***

No. You will be issued a debit card where funds are automatically deposited each month.

***Will you inform the child's parents that I am receiving this subsidy?***

No. Your application and involvement in this program is confidential. Your personal information may only be released at your request.

***What kind of things can I pay for with this subsidy?***

You can use the money you receive from this program ONLY on items and activities that benefit the child. They are listed in the subsidy agreement, and include things like: groceries, school clothes, summer camp, a portion of your rent or utilities, etc. The money cannot be used to the benefit of either of the child's birth parents.

If you have questions about **close relative caregiver subsidies**, send an email to [cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.kinfirst@dc.gov) or call 1-866-FAMKIN1