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AS PART OF 'NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH,' ACS COMMISSIONER URGES NYC GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN TO APPLY TO SERVE ON BRAND NEW FEDERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

*In Recent Years, ACS Has Increased The Proportion of Children Placed
With Kin, Like Grandparents, & NYC Should Have a Seat at the Table*

*Federal HHS Now Accepting Nominations for "Grandparents Raising
Grandchildren" Advisory Council to Help States Determine Best Tools to
Support Those Fostering Or Adopting Their Grandkids*

NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner today urged New York grandparents who are fostering or have adopted their grandchildren to apply to serve on a new federal advisory council created as part of the just-passed "Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act." Last year, 2,883 children in New York City were placed in kinship homes, which may include a grandparent's home or the home of a close relative. ACS strives to help families reunify, however, if that's not possible the agency works hard to identify family members, like grandparents, who can provide kinship foster care.

"New York City grandparents who are fostering or have adopted their grandkids should apply to serve on the "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" advisory council, which will better inform federal policy makers on the needs of kinship guardians across the country," **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "We know that children fare best when they maintain strong ties to their families and that's why in New York City we've increased our efforts to place foster youth with kinship guardians, including grandparents. Our NYC grandparents deserve a seat at the table and so, I'm urging all eligible grandparents to apply!"

"Like many grandparents across the country, I adopted my wonderful grandchildren after realizing that they unfortunately wouldn't be able to reunify with their mother. New York does a good job at ensuring kinship guardians, like myself, have the resources they need to raise our children, however, there's always more to be done. This advisory

council will help make sure our federal legislators understand the needs of grandparents and other kinship guardians not just in New York but across the country,” said **Elizabeth Thompson, a New York City grandmother who recently adopted her six grandchildren.**

Studies show that children placed with kin (like grandparents or other close relatives) have increased placement stability and higher rates of behavioral and emotional well-being than children placed with non-kin caregivers. Children placed with kin are also more likely than those in non-kin foster care to reach permanency overall through reunification, adoption or guardianship.

Across the country, more than 2.5 million grandparents are the primary caretaker of their grandchildren. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the number of foster children placed with a grandparent or other relatives increased from 24 percent in 2006 to 32 percent in 2016.

When placement into foster care is necessary, ACS makes every effort to minimize disruptions to families by placing siblings together and identifying family members who can provide kinship foster care. Safely increasing placement with kin is a priority in the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint and a recommendation in the 2018 Interagency Foster Care Task Force report. ACS recently established 10 new kinship specialist positions in the ACS Division of Child Protection (DCP). These staff have the dedicated function of finding and engaging kin caregivers for children entering foster care. Kinship Specialists support child protection staff by finding a kin caregiver to place a child when the youth can no longer safely remain in a home. ACS has also launched targeted pilots with two foster care agencies, Children’s Village and Little Flower, to increase placement with and support for kin. Through ACS’s Home Away from Home initiative, ACS and its foster care agencies have been working to increase kinship placement and supports for kin system-wide. ACS has set a target of increasing the proportion of children placed with kin to 46% by the end of FY 2020. The proportion of NYC children in foster care who are placed with kin has increased from 30.7% as of October 2016 to 37.3% as of August 2018.

Earlier this year, Congress passed into law the “Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act,” which will, for the first time ever, establish a federal advisory council to support grandparents raising grandchildren. The advisory council will include: the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, the Administrator for the Administration for Community Living, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health & Substance Use, the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families as well as at least one grandparent raising a grandchild and an older relative caregiver of children. Overall, the council will help conduct outreach to states and localities that provide information and support for grandparents raising grandchildren.

According to the federal Administration for Community Living, anyone may nominate themselves and/or one or more qualified grandparents raising grandchildren for

membership on the advisory council. The deadline for nominations is December 3rd, 2018. Click [here](#) for more details on how to apply Click here for more details on how to apply.

“In New York City, approximately 3,000 children in foster care are in kinship care, with relatives or family friends who have stepped up to provide safe, loving homes for those youth. The new advisory council is a good opportunity to hear the concerns of many grandparents, who are kinship guardians, across the country so that we can improve outcomes for those children,” **said Deputy Commissioner Julie Farber.**

“Grandparents are among the most influential mentors in a child’s life, providing a safety net and guidance for years to come,” **said Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado.** “If you are fostering or have adopted young kin, your commitment is honorable and appreciated. By serving on this federal advisory council, you are helping grandparents like yourself receive critical supports and services.”

“Family comes first, and I applaud the grandparents who are able to adopt their grandchildren,” **said Senator Roxanne J. Persaud.** “Now, I encourage these caregivers to try and serve on the new federal advisory council to better shape the needs of all foster youth in New York, and the entire country.”

“As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families, I have sat down with many kinship grandparents to listen to their concerns and to discuss how we can work together to create a better system that will improve outcomes and help our most vulnerable children grow and flourish,” **said Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee.** “It is essential that these grandparents sit at the table and participate in the decision-making process to shape policy impacting them. I urge every eligible grandparent to take advantage of this important opportunity and apply for a position on the new Federal HHS “Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” advisory council to influence change and speak out on behalf of the thousands of grandparents who have taken on the responsibility to provide secure, loving homes for the children in their care.”

“Through kinship foster care, grandparents and close relatives provide loving homes to hundreds of New York City children,” **said Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.** “Their experiences and voices can help ensure kinship guardians nationwide are supported, so I hope as many eligible grandparents in our city as possible apply to join this new federal advisory council.”

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