



Guardianship Assistance Programs (GAP)

Guardianship is a strategy and permanency option that can help caregivers, including relatives, financially provide for a child that has been living in their home and exiting foster care. This permanency option promotes the preservation of family, community, and cultural ties.

Children and Family Services monitors statewide guardianship permanency goals in efforts to make available a select number of subsidies to those in need. Currently, North Dakota has **79** total youth in the Guardianship Assistance Program; **10** IV-E and **69** State Funded. In addition, there are **23** additional youth referrals for the GAP program.

State Funded Guardianship Assistance Program

North Dakota provides funding for the guardianship of children who are not Title IV-E eligible.

State Funded GAP may be available to children who meet the following criteria:

1. Have been removed from his or her home pursuant to a judicial determination that continuation in the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child;
2. Be under the custody of a North Dakota Human Service Zone, North Dakota Tribe or North Dakota Division of Juvenile Services with an open foster care program;
3. Have had reunification and adoption ruled out as permanency options;
4. Be 12 years of age and older. Children under the age of 12 will be considered if a sibling in the sibling group is age 12 or older

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Federal IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program

The Children's Bureau provides funding to states and tribes that have been approved to operate a Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program. The Program helps support relatives who become legal guardians of children from foster care for whom they previously cared for as foster parents.

Federally funded GAP may be available to children who meet the following criteria:

1. Have been removed from his or her home pursuant to a judicial determination that continuation in the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child.
2. Be currently in the custody of a North Dakota Human Service Zone, North Dakota Tribe or North Dakota Division of Juvenile Services immediately prior to the guardianship being finalized, unless the child is a sibling of an eligible child who is already placed in Federal IV-E Guardianship with the same relative guardian;
3. Be under 18 years of age;
4. Have resided with the licensed relative foster parent for a minimum of six consecutive months and the prospective guardian(s) must meet the definition of an identified relative as defined in the NDCC 50-11;
5. Be eligible to receive IV-E foster care maintenance payments;
6. Demonstrate a strong attachment to the prospective guardian and the prospective guardian has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child;
7. Have reunification and adoption ruled out for the child

