



Journey Toward Licensure Kinship

Becoming licensed can feel overwhelming. Just take it one step at a time. Keep this checklist handy to track your progress or reference as you're moving forward! You can check things off in whichever order works for you.

There are different licensing options, so please choose the situation that best fits your case. Be aware that there are many licensing requirements that can be waived for kinship caregivers. Please contact CaRES or your licenser with questions.

- **Licensing when a child is already in your home.**
 - **Initial Kinship license**
 - **Full Kinship license**
- **Licensing when a child is not in your home**
 - **Full Kinship License**
 - **General Foster Care License**

INITIAL Kinship License

An **Initial kinship license** is available to kinship caregivers when court-ordered by a judge when a child is in shelter care status. A shelter care hearing is a court "hearing" within 72 hours of a child or youth being removed from their parent's care. At the hearing, a judge will decide if the child or youth should stay in out of home placement or be returned to the parents.

Having an initial kinship license means that kinship caregivers will receive basic foster care reimbursement payments for up to 90 days while completing the full kinship license requirements. **This reimbursement will end after 90 days** if you choose not to get licensed or if your licensing process takes more than 90 days, at which point you may apply for TANF.

When a Judge orders an Initial license, the worker will:

- Conduct background checks on all household members age 16 and above.
- Come to your home and do a health and safety walkthrough.
- Provide you with a [placement agreement](#)

If you have been charged with a crime in the past, please do not assume this will prevent you from getting licensed. Talk about your individual circumstance with your assigned worker and review the [Secretary's List of Crimes and Negative Actions for Employees and Providers \(wa.gov\)](#)

FULL Kinship License

A Full kinship license is available to kinship caregivers who are referred to the Licensing Division for a kinship license, OR kinship caregivers who completed an initial kinship license, want to stay licensed, and receive uninterrupted foster care maintenance payments.

If you completed an initial kinship license, you will need to complete a full kinship license within 90 days for uninterrupted reimbursement.

- DCYF will send you a link to WA CAP to begin your electronic application process.
- After you complete your licensing application, a licensor will contact you to conduct **interviews** including all your household members.
 - At least one interview must happen in your home.
 - Children living in the home will be interviewed.
 - If you have adult children, they will be contacted.
 - For couples, staff will complete at least one interview with both adults and another interview with each adult individually.
- The Licensor will also conduct a **Home Inspection**.
- Once the home study is complete, you will receive a draft to review before it is final, and you are given a copy along with your license.
- Complete Kinship Core Training within Three Years if You Want to Stay Licensed. [Kinship Core Training | UW School of Social Work Professional Education](#)

General Foster Care License

If you have been contacted by a Kinship Notification letter regarding a child you know coming into care, and the child is not yet placed in your home, you may be eligible for a **FULL kinship license** or you can apply for a **general foster care license**. Please follow the steps:

- Fill out the [Foster Parent Inquiry form](#) and CaRES will email you within 48 hours.
- Follow the steps in The Journey towards Licensure checklist- [checklist \(alliancecares.org\)](#)

To find out more about the foster care licensing process, you may visit the State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Foster Care Licensing page: [Overview | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)

- Once the home study is complete, you will receive a draft to review before it is final, and you are given a copy along with your license.

Interstate Compact (ICPC) - Child not in the home

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is an agreement that governs the placement of children from one state into another state. Depending on the state the child or youth is currently living in, applicants must have an approved home study or a foster care license. Each case is unique depending on the sending state. When DCYF receives the ICPC from the sending state, they will contact you and start the licensing process.

If Washington is the receiving state, DCYF:

- Completes the home study,
- Provides courtesy supervision of the case,
- Arranges services to the child paid for by the sending State.
- Sending state is responsible for:
 - Financial coverage of child's needs
 - Medical needs of the child, including services child would need in the home of placement if their state medical doesn't cover the need.
 - Payments to care provider (Not all states will pay caregivers even if they are licensed)
 - If placement is disrupting or needing additional services, WA will contact the sending state for funds.

Contact Alliance CaRES to get support, guidance and answers to any questions! Visit <https://alliancecares.org/> or email us at alliancecares@uw.edu.

To find out more about the licensing process, you may visit the State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) Foster Care Licensing page: [Overview | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)