

# Overview: Kinship Care Resource Center

DECEMBER 18, 2019

INGHAM COUNTY GREAT START COLLABORATIVE

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OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**  
AND INSPIRES LEADERS



## COMMUNITY PROGRAM

# Kinship Care Resource Center

**Mission:** Support all of Michigan's kinship families through information and referral services, education and training, and outreach to caregivers, service providers and communities.

**Vision:** A Michigan where all children in kinship care achieve safety, well-being and permanency.





# What is kinship care?

Full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparent, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child (*fictive kin*)





## MANY PATHS TO KINSHIP CARE

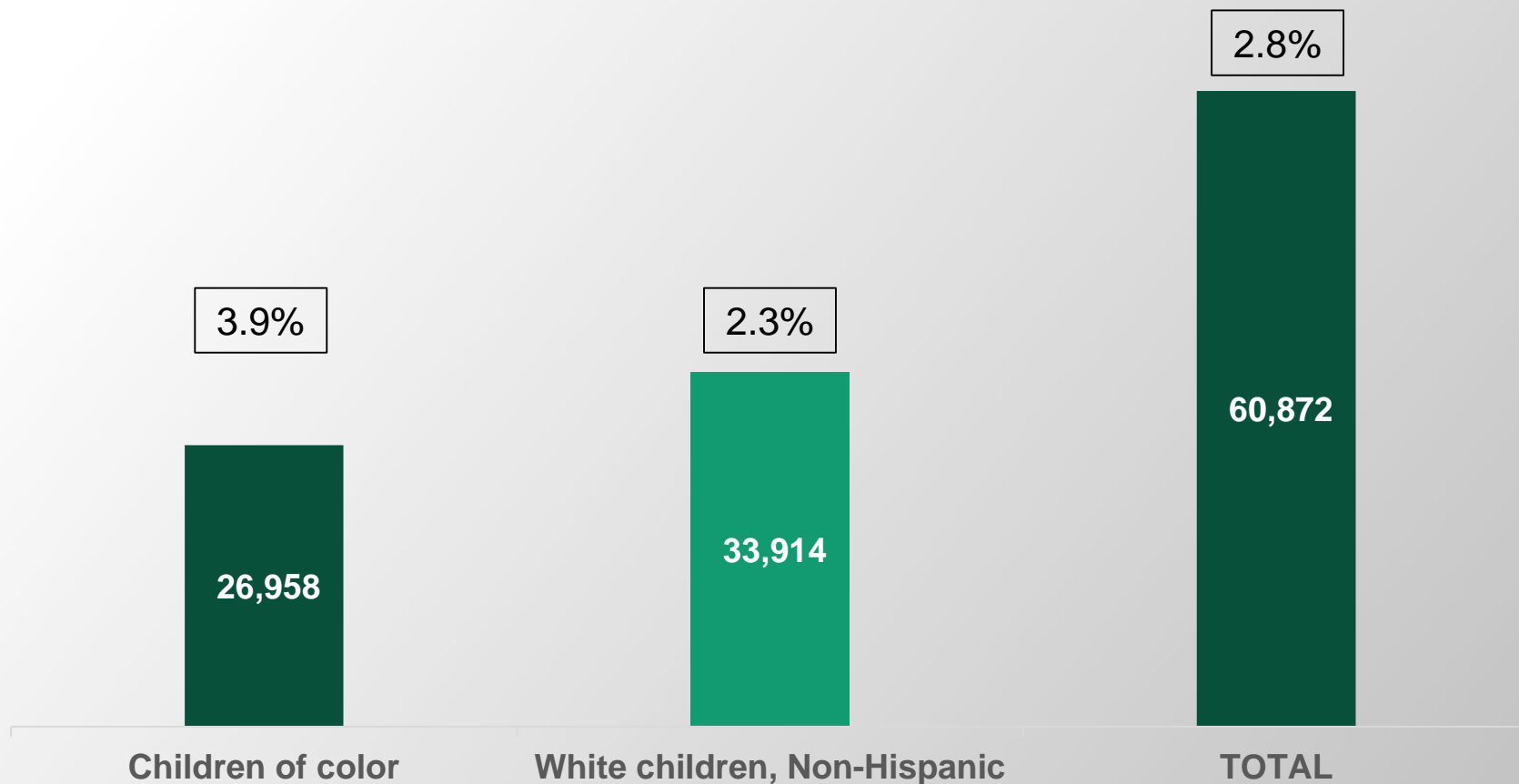
# **Families find themselves caring for relative children when:**

- Deployment of parents in the military
- Death of a parent
- Parental incarceration
- Immigration separations
- Concern for health, safety and/or well-being of the child



## THE NUMBERS: MICHIGAN

# Children in Kinship Care





## CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE

# Trauma

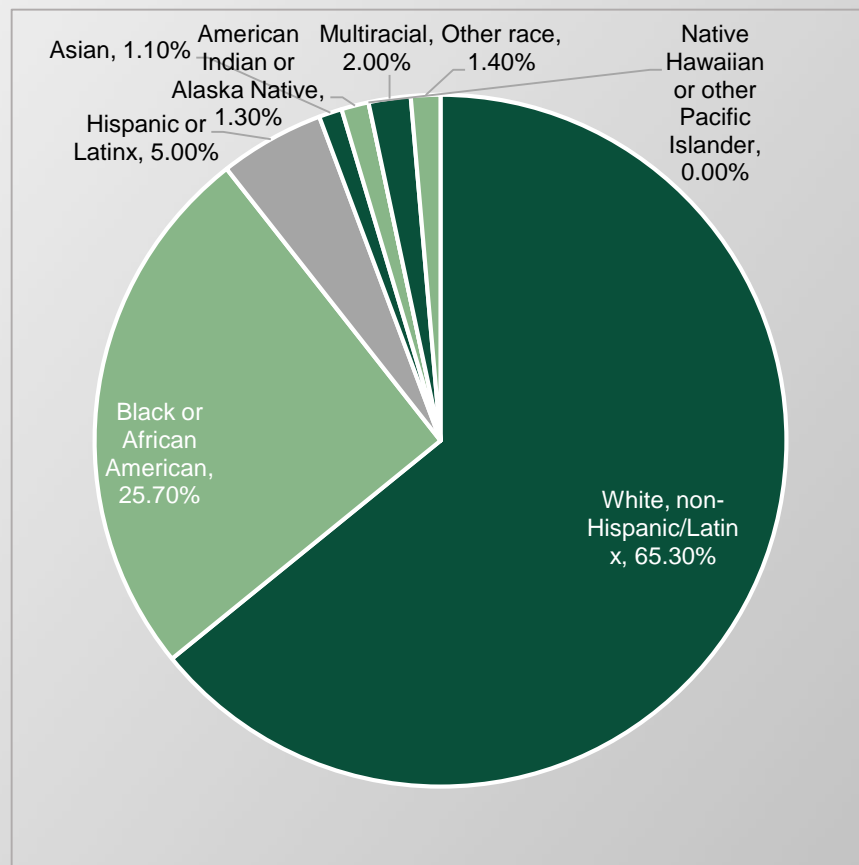
- It is typically universal that there is some amount of trauma that has occurred in the child's life
- Increased need for specialized services
- Outside of the child welfare system, it may be extremely difficult to gain access to these services



## THE NUMBERS: MICHIGAN

# +66,000 Caregivers

- 32.3% do not have parents present
- 63.1% are under age 60
- 54.5% are in the workforce
- 21.8% are in poverty
- 27.1% have a disability
- 32.5% are unmarried





## KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

# Who are they?

- Grandparents
- Great aunts and uncles
- Aunts and uncles
- Cousins
- Siblings



Relatives are less likely to seek services, resources or assistance





## KINSHIP CARE

# Benefits

- Minimizes trauma
- Improves child well-being
- Increases permanency
- Improves behavioral and mental health outcomes
- Promotes sibling ties
- Provides a bridge for older youth
- Preserves children's cultural identity and community connections



## TYPES OF KINSHIP CARE

# Formal vs. Informal

- Formal Care: Court agreement (e.g., foster care, guardianship, adoption)
- Informal Care: No court involvement
  - Parents voluntarily leave or abandon child(ren) with relative caregiver



## CURRENT ISSUES IN KINSHIP CARE

# Challenges

- Resource and information barriers, including:
  - Financial assistance
  - Health insurance and medical decisions/permissions
  - Child care
- Legal challenges
- Foster care
- Respite care
- Lack of access to services for the biological parents



## KINSHIP CARE RESOURCE CENTER

# Our Services

- Information and referral assistance
- Respite care funds for kinship caregivers ages 55 or older in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties
- Local support group contacts and meeting information
- Trainings, workshops and other events for kinship caregivers, service providers, policymakers and others
- Resources for kinship caregivers, service providers and researchers



## KINSHIP CARE RESOURCE CENTER

# Who we helped

- **149** contacts with kinship caregivers and providers
- Families representing **28** counties and **46** cities
- **81** grandparents, **21** aunts/uncles, and **9** parents
- **9** service providers



## KINSHIP CARE RESOURCE CENTER

# Types of support provided:

- **135** phone calls
- **13** emails
- **66** families seeking legal supports
- **36** families seeking financial supports
- **30** families seeking support navigating services
- **23** families seeking respite care
- **19** families seeking support groups



## KINSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

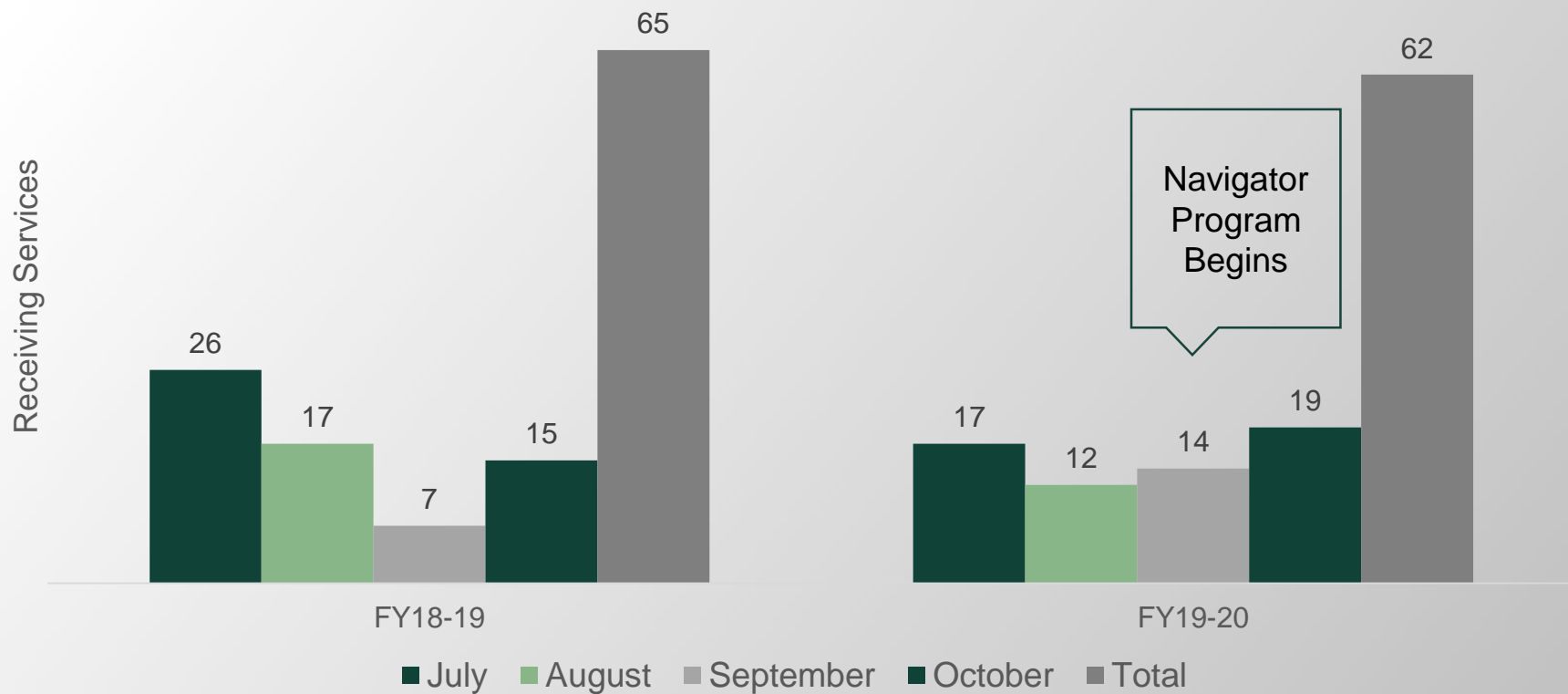
# Michigan's Kinship Navigators

- Goal: safety, permanency and well-being
- Model:
  - Information and referral services
  - Service coordination
  - Outreach and training
  - Staffing experience
- Funding:
  - Program development funds from Congress
  - Opportunity to receive federal match
- Evaluation



## KINSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

# Short-term Progress







## CAREGIVER SUPPORT

# TCOA Respite Program

- Federal Older Americans Act
- Provides rest, relief and a break from everyday caregiving
- Fund activities for child to attend/participate
- Eligibility criteria



## POLICY & ADVOCACY

# Systemic Barriers

- Coordinating local services
- Increasing awareness and knowledge
- Addressing lack of resources for kinship caregivers
- Reaching informal caregivers, particularly people of color
- Supporting caregivers and children with formal placements



## COLLABORATION

# Partnerships

- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Local Support Group Network
- Chance at Childhood
- Service providers
  - Information sharing
  - Referrals
- Various systems:
  - Head Start, Area Agencies on Aging, Regional Resource Teams, etc.
- Kinship families

# Questions?

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