

# H.R. 5406, The Grandfamily Housing Act

Endorsed by: Generations United, LeadingAge, National Council on Aging, Massachusetts Commission on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

## BACKGROUND:

- The opioid epidemic has placed a tremendous strain not only on those who are struggling with substance use disorder, but also on their families, friends, and communities. For children whose parents are unable to take care of them, there are two main options: staying with relatives or foster care.
- Right now, there are over 2.6 million children being raised by their grandparents, and that number is only expected to grow.
- On average, foster parents receive more government support than grandfamilies.<sup>1</sup>
- However, less than one-third of eligible grandfamilies receive housing assistance.
- The majority of subsidized and market-rate senior residences do not permit children to live in their buildings.<sup>2</sup> As a result, almost half of every low-income renter grandparent-headed households spend more than fifty percent (50%) of their income on rent.<sup>3</sup>
- Grandparent-led households encounter many unique challenges, including:
  - Not having time to plan financially for raising a child;
  - Not having the resources to ensure their home is ready to raise a child;
  - Not being able to navigate the complex school requirements to ensure that their grandchild does not fall behind when changing their living situation; and
  - Needing to spend their savings or refinance a home to provide for their grandchildren, thereby putting their own financial future in jeopardy.

## ABOUT THE BILL:

- The *Grandfamily Housing Act* would:
  - Help nonprofits and local housing authorities provide a safe living space for grandfamilies;
  - Help housing providers employ a Grandfamily Resident Service Coordinator;
  - Build a stable environment for grandchildren; and
  - Finance the construction and upkeep of grandfamily housing and communal spaces.

The *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act*, which passed in 2018, established a federal advisory commission to examine this issue and others. But there is still no federal funding dedicated specifically to supporting grandparents raising grandchildren. The *Grandfamily Housing Act* builds on that work by authorizing and funding a competitive nationwide pilot program for nonprofits, for-profits or public housing authorities to provide resources and services for grandparents raising grandchildren. The bill provides for \$100 million over two fiscal years.

The money may be used to employ a “**Grandfamily Resident Service Coordinator**” who would serve as an on-site resource for grandfamilies. This coordinator would engage with grandparents and be an on-site resource to help residents and community members navigate and access available resources.

## WHO WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR THESE GRANTS?

Non-Profits, For-Profits, Public Housing, Section 202, and Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Programs would be eligible for these grants.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/01/22/feature/inside-the-innovative-d-c-housing-development-for-grandfamilies/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/01/22/feature/inside-the-innovative-d-c-housing-development-for-grandfamilies/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gu.org/app/uploads/2019/11/19-Grandfamilies-Infographic-APlacetoCallHome1.png>