California Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: November 2026

State Population (2025 Census estimate)

☒ more than 11 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2025)

☒ more than 20,000

- Adoption assistance caseload — 86,113
- Guardianship assistance caseload (Kin-GAP) — 17,444
- Total — 103,557

State Administration Type

☒ County Administered

Pre-Service Training

Pre-approval training for prospective resource parents is offered by counties through several modalities: 1) Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) through local community colleges and 2) Online training through Foster Parent College. In addition, counties can provide their own training.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) established the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process that must be followed by each county, which includes an array of requirements, one of which is training. RFA requires prospective caregivers, which includes foster, adoptive, and guardianship caregivers to complete a minimum of 12 hours of pre-approval training, plus CPR/first aid training. Counties can choose how to provide the training and with whom, using a variety of curricula as California does not have a universal training. Instead, CDSS contracts with the Foster Parent College and FKCE, which counties may use to offer training to their families.

CDSS has outlined a number of requirements for pre-approval training that counties must include. The requirements include (but are not limited to) the following:

- An overview of the child protective and probation systems
- The effects of trauma, including grief and loss, and child abuse and neglect, on child development and behavior, and methods to behaviorally support children impacted by that trauma or child abuse and neglect
- Positive discipline and the importance of self-esteem

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- Health issues in foster care
- Accessing services and supports to address education needs, physical, mental, and behavioral health, and substance use disorders, including culturally relevant services.
- The rights of a child in foster care and the resource family's responsibility to safeguard those rights, including the right to have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to not be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, or HIV status
- Cultural needs of children, including instruction on cultural competency and sensitivity, and related best practices for providing adequate care for children or youth across diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, as well as children or youth identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
- Basic instruction on existing laws and procedures regarding the safety of foster youth at school
- Permanence, well-being, and education needs of children
- Child and adolescent development, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression
- The role of resource families, including working cooperatively with the child welfare or probation agency, the child's family, and other service providers implementing the case plan

In cases of emergency placement, the training may be completed after placement.

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

In California, guardianships established through the juvenile or probate courts may be eligible to receive benefits through the Kin-GAP program for eligible relative guardians (juvenile court only) or AFDC-FC for non-related legal guardians.

The Kin-GAP program provides a monthly payment to relative guardians who meet the eligibility requirements. A legal guardianship can enhance family preservation and stability by providing relatives with an alternative route to permanency when adoption is not the desired permanency option for the relative. The transition from foster care to legal guardianship is not automatic. Prior to the court granting the legal guardianship, the caregiver must ensure they meet the requirements. This includes the completion of a guardianship study (in foster care, this is typically accomplished through approval as a resource family or as a tribally approved home). To be eligible for funding through the Kin-GAP program, the child must have been residing in the approved home of the prospective relative guardian for at least six months before the court terminates dependency. Once the requirements are met, the social worker will work with the relative guardian to negotiate the Kin-GAP payment and complete the paperwork.

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The county with jurisdiction over the child's foster care case is responsible for the Kin-GAP benefits and will work with the relative guardians to ensure the process runs smoothly.

The Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) is an entitlement program that provides financial assistance and medical coverage to support the adoption of children who might otherwise remain in long-term foster care. The federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 established incentives to encourage the adoption of children with special needs. In California, the Legislature created the AAP to help provide children with the security, stability, and permanency of an adoptive family. Children who are eligible for AAP may receive federally funded or state-funded benefits, depending on eligibility requirements. The request for AAP benefits, eligibility determination, benefit negotiation, and execution of the AAP agreement must all be completed prior to the adoption finalization.

AAP is intended to ensure all children adopted from the child welfare system have access to financial assistance and supportive services regardless of the adoptive family's income. The role of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is to provide guidance on AAP policy and implementation; however, counties are responsible for making final eligibility and benefit decisions. Counties may consult with CDSS for clarification, particularly regarding a child's needs or subsidy amounts. In certain situations, involving children with complex care needs, CDSS may work directly with counties and other state agencies to help coordinate necessary support for families.

The following AAP benefits are available to all eligible children:

- Monthly negotiated subsidy payment
- Medical coverage through Medicaid/Medi-Cal
- Reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses (up to $400 per adopted child)
- Payment for eligible out-of-home placement
- Payment for eligible wraparound services

The AAP benefits may continue:

- Following a subsequent adoption
- Regardless of the adoptive family's state or country of residence
- Until age 21, if eligibility requirements are met

Post-permanency services are administered by individual counties and vary significantly across California. Some counties provide services directly, while others contract with community-based organizations or use a combination of both.

CDSS also contracts with post-permanency service providers on behalf of counties that use CDSS Adoptions Regional Offices to complete adoptions.

California's Post-Permanency Navigator https://capostpermanency.org/ serves as a central online resource for adoptive and kinship families, as well as social service professionals. The

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website provides access to statewide and county-specific information, support services, and permanency-competent resources.

Families can access:

- Local and statewide support resources
- Educational materials and service directories
- Connections to permanency-informed providers

Professionals serving adoptive and kinship families can access:

- Practical tools and resources to support their work
- Opportunities to connect and learn from peers throughout California
- Ongoing updates through listservs and shared learning opportunities

In California, adoptive and guardianship families may also access critical services outside of the child welfare system. All AAP-eligible children are entitled to Medi-Cal/Medicaid coverage and may qualify for a wide range of services offered through California's managed care plans, behavioral health system, or other service providers. This includes services available through **CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal)**, a multi-year initiative administered by the **Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)** to improve access to coordinated health and behavioral health services.

Geographic Area Covered

Specific post-permanency services that are offered vary by county. Adoptive and guardianship families across the state are eligible for services; however, not every county will have access to these services throughout their entire county. The state is seeking to ensure more equity in services offered throughout the state. More rural counties and more rural areas within a county tend to have fewer services available for families.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

☒ Other (listed below)
Eligibility varies by county. The county from which the child or youth is adopted or the family obtained guardianship is the county that is responsible for providing post-permanency services. Regardless of where the child and family move, the original county where the adoption or guardianship finalizes is responsible for providing funds to cover post-permanency services.

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Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

See variations outlined in the Eligible Population for Overall Post-Permanency Program section above.

Outreach and Engagement

The state does not require a certain type of outreach. Outreach varies by county and by service provider.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

☒ Other (listed below)
Post-permanency services vary by county. Some counties contract with one or more organizational providers, while others provide services directly, and some do a combination of both.

18 counties contract with CDSS to provide post-permanency services, with services provided through contracted agencies.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

Adoptive parents may request a change in the adoption assistance agreement at any time. Adoptive parents may submit their request in person, by phone, or by writing to the responsible public agency (county or CDSS Adoptions Regional Office). No form is necessary to request a change in the adoption assistance agreement; however, parents may be asked to provide information and documentation to support their request. There are no standard AAP reviews that take place. However, parents may renegotiate the AAP rate at any time upon their request.

There is no standard review for guardians who receive payments; however, home visits occur every six months.

Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

CDSS has issued guidance to county agencies regarding how to report on disrupted or dissolved intercountry adoptions using the state's child welfare management system.

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Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2025)

Information not available. Because California is county-administered, each county uses their budget to provide post-permanency services

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2025)

Funding sources include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Title IV-B, Part 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families/PSSF)
2. Adoption savings (reported on CB 496 Part 4 – Annual Adoption Savings Report)
3. Adoption/Guardianship Incentive Program Payments (AIPP)
4. County funds

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