



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Aging**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Shapiro Administration Announces Expansion of Free Hotline for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Connecting Older Adults with Legal Advice and Services to Help Families Navigate the Court System**

*The **PA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Legal Line** can be reached at 1-877-727-7529 and offers a variety of resources including help on custody proceedings, how to prepare for court and connecting older adults with caregiver support groups.*

*There are approximately 83,000 grandparents among other kinship caregivers who are caring for nearly 260,000 children in Pennsylvania.*

**Hershey, PA – Pennsylvania Department of Aging Jason Kavulich** today announced the expansion of a free legal service and referral resource to support grandparents raising grandchildren across the Commonwealth. The **PA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Legal Line** is a first-of-its-kind phone service staffed by attorneys at SeniorLAW Center who will offer legal information, advice and referrals as well as services for older caregivers who need support in custody or other legal areas involving kinship care.

“A growing number of grandparents in Pennsylvania are becoming a parent for the second time as they make the selfless choice to raise their grandchildren. While supporting their adult child with a substance use disorder, coping with an unfortunate death or other circumstances they could not predict, grandparents in this position are often faced with suddenly having to navigate unfamiliar systems,” said **Secretary Kavulich**. “The Department is committed to ensuring older adults – whether they are still working, retired or act as caregivers – have the support and resources they need to thrive in their golden years. We are excited to collaborate with SeniorLAW Center to provide this free resource statewide to help grandparents raising grandchildren with legal issues.”

By calling SeniorLAW Center at **1-877-727-7529**, older caregivers can receive free advice and counsel on a variety of civil matters, including custody and dependency; support in representing themselves in family court, such as help with preparing necessary documents; information on kinship caregivers, support groups, and other

resources. A grant from the Department of Aging has enabled this service to expand from serving the Philadelphia region, to now serving all 67 counties in the Commonwealth.

"The law affects all of our lives dramatically, but particularly those who are low-income, vulnerable, or older," said Karen Buck, Executive Director, SeniorLAW Center. "It is a privilege to pursue our mission of justice for older Pennsylvanians, upon whose shoulders we all stand. Bravo to Governor Shapiro and Secretary Kavulich for investing in access to justice and the lives of older people and the children they are raising. Onward!"

Currently in Pennsylvania, there are approximately 83,000 grandparents who are among other kinship caregivers – such as aunts or uncles, adult siblings, or a close family friend – who are caring for nearly 260,000 children. Many of these families interact regularly with Pennsylvania's court system.

"We applaud and support the expansion of this helpline into a service accessible to all grandparents raising grandchildren in Pennsylvania. Older Pennsylvanians are often among our most vulnerable citizens, and it is our responsibility to ensure they have access to justice and protections against abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation," said **Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Debra Todd**. "Through the work of the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts and our Advisory Council, we are taking meaningful steps to safeguard older adults and strengthen support systems statewide."

## **A History of Investing in and Caring for Older Adults**

With the new **PA Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Legal Line**, this free legal advice resource is yet another tool for older adults in the Commonwealth who are already supported by the **Shapiro Administration's** [Aging Our Way, PA](#) – Pennsylvania's 10-year strategic plan to improve the infrastructure of aging services.

[PDA's Caregiver Support Program](#) provides resources and assistance to individuals who assume primary responsibility as a caregiver of their loved ones. The program, administered by the 52 Area Agencies on Aging, provides access to respite care, addresses the need for formal and informal supports, and offers financial reimbursement of eligible out-of-pocket costs associated with caregiving-related services and supplies.

The Department of Aging also offers supports for the Commonwealth's 1.5 million unpaid caregivers, including grandparents raising grandchildren, with its [PA CareKit](#) – providing training, connection to respite services, and personalized tools to help informal caregivers address their unique situations.

PA KinConnector is a resource that provides information, referrals, and education programs for kinship caregivers in Pennsylvania. PA KinConnector also runs a helpline that can be reached by calling 1-866-KIN-2111 (1-866-546-2111). The PA KinConnector helpline is staffed by knowledgeable, compassionate social service professionals prepared to help kinship care families understand and access resources that may be able to help them and children in their care.

**EDITORS:** Photos and video from the event will be [available on PAcast](#).

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