



# Kinship Services

## Northern Rivers meet the qualifications for Families First regulations

**BILL MARSZALEK, Med**  
Executive Program Director  
Foster Care Services  
Bill.Marszalek@nrfs.org  
518.346.4251, ext. 7532

**DAMARISE ALEXANDER-  
MANN, LMSW**  
Program Director  
Foster Care Services  
Damarise.Alexander-  
Mann@nrfs.org  
518.461.8001

**COLLEEN VOGEL, MSW**  
Director of Homefinding  
Foster Care Services  
Colleen.Vogel@nrfs.org  
518.857.8027

**Albany Office**  
Nicole Nelson, LMSW  
Program Supervisor  
Nicole.Nelson@nrfs.org  
518.428.4200

**Queensbury Office**  
Andrea Lamkins, LCSW  
Program Coordinator  
Andrea.Lamkins@nrfs.org  
518.798.4496, ext. 1061

**Schenectady Office**  
Melanie McCormick, LCSW  
Program Coordinator  
Melanie.McCormick@nrfs.org  
518.346.4251, ext. 2205

*These are services provided by  
Northern Rivers Family of Services  
and member agencies.*

The Family First Prevention Services Act, signed into law on February 9, 2018, is bringing focus on the need and importance of maintaining children in and with families. Northern Rivers Family of Services offers a continuum of services that help counties identify, certify, and support family and kinship families for youth who are not able to stay with their parents.

### Emergency Certification

Prospective kinship homes and families are discovered at the time of removal as resources for youth. These families usually require more significant levels of support than traditional foster families because emergency kinship resources are often not prepared for this new responsibility. They require guidance and support to navigate the rules and regulations accompanying the youth placed in their care. Northern Rivers is able to provide emergency certifications to ensure families are certified in a timely fashion, thereby securing the necessary Title IV-E funding.

### Kinship Certification and Support

Once families who are interested in caring for their kin are located, Northern Rivers is able to provide high levels of support and guidance for them as they work through the certification process. After certification, Northern Rivers continues its support of those families on their journey through kinship care, whether it be reunification with family members, KinGap, or adoption. Children placed with Northern Rivers through kinship certification receive the same supports as any child placed with a Northern Rivers home.

### Family Finding

Northern Rivers builds a package of tasks and services to support children placed in the system who do not have permanency in their lives. Local districts often have many needs regarding their children and often choose to create a package of services that meets their specific needs.

Northern Rivers offers flexible options for family finding services including:

- Record mining to look for relatives and nonfictive kin who may be interested in caring for the child
- Phone calls and meetings with prospective family members to see if they are able to care of the child
- Genograms that identify the many connections that children have had in their past
- Access and use of national databases to locate family members
- Emergency certifications when family is found

### Other Ways Northern Rivers Supports Counties

- Wendy's Wonderful Kids, available in Albany, Columbia, Orange, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Rensselaer counties.
- 30 Days to Family (Albany County only), which works with Child Protective Services (CPS) to help identify families and place children with kin and nonkin as quickly as possible.

**NORTHERNRIVERS**

# *The Northern Rivers Difference*

As a Northern Rivers foster parent, you're never alone. We believe that foster parents deserve the best support, including:

- A team of clinicians, case workers, and support staff available 24/7/365, both on call and in home
- Full- and part-time fostering opportunities to make sure you have the right fit
- Monthly stipends for the care and support of foster children
- Full health and wellness coverage for all foster children
- Extensive online resources including discussion groups, training materials, feedback to and from program staff, and connections with other foster families
- Services delivered through a trauma-informed care model that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma on foster children
- A network of more than 250 foster homes in upstate New York with the ability to serve more than 20 counties

