

NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
grandparents
for children's rights

ADVOCACY, EDUCATION & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
FOR CHILDREN AND KINSHIP FAMILIES

Our History

The National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights is a nationwide network of grandparents, community members, and professionals working together to provide education, support, and advocacy for children, grandparents, and kinship families.

Founded in 2002 by a grandmother on Long Island, NY in response to losing custody of her grandchild after her daughter's death. She joined forces with grandparents in other parts of New York, West Virginia, and Maryland, ultimately forming a national movement by and for grandparents. Overcoming legal and geographical barriers, as well as financial and physical limitations, the group began to identify ways to support each other and advance common goals around visitation rights and legal rights as temporary and permanent caregivers.

NCGCR's accomplishments include effectively organizing the first national kinship summit in Arlington, VA, four national GRANDRallies in Washington DC, the first international summit in New York City, and numerous rallies at state capitols. We created a national warm line to provide information and referrals, and we led successful advocacy campaigns around non-parent custody issues, visitation, and services for kinship families. For instance, NCGCR was instrumental in the passage of 2003 New York State Grandparents Rights Act and the 2008 Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Improving Adoption Act, which included mandatory notification of grandparents upon the removal of children from their parents and that information be automatically provided to relatives about their custodial options.

Our direct services over the past six years have centered on a program hosted at the State University of New York at Stony Brook that provided counseling, support, and mental health service for more than 600 grandparents raising grandchildren. In 2011, because of budget cuts New York State eliminated nearly all funding for kinship programs, forcing NCGCR to suspend the Stony Brook program and to re-envision its service model.

In the last six months, NCGCR has made programmatic and structural changes that allow us to operate within the means of a scaled-back budget. A generous grant from The Hagedorn Foundation through its "Building for Change" initiative has enabled us to respond to the immediate needs of children and families and to maintain our grassroots advocacy network, while working with an organizational development consultant to map out a plan for managed growth and long-term sustainability. That plan comprises the four priorities put forth in this proposal: responsive direct service, expert training and technical assistance, grassroots advocacy, and strong national leadership.