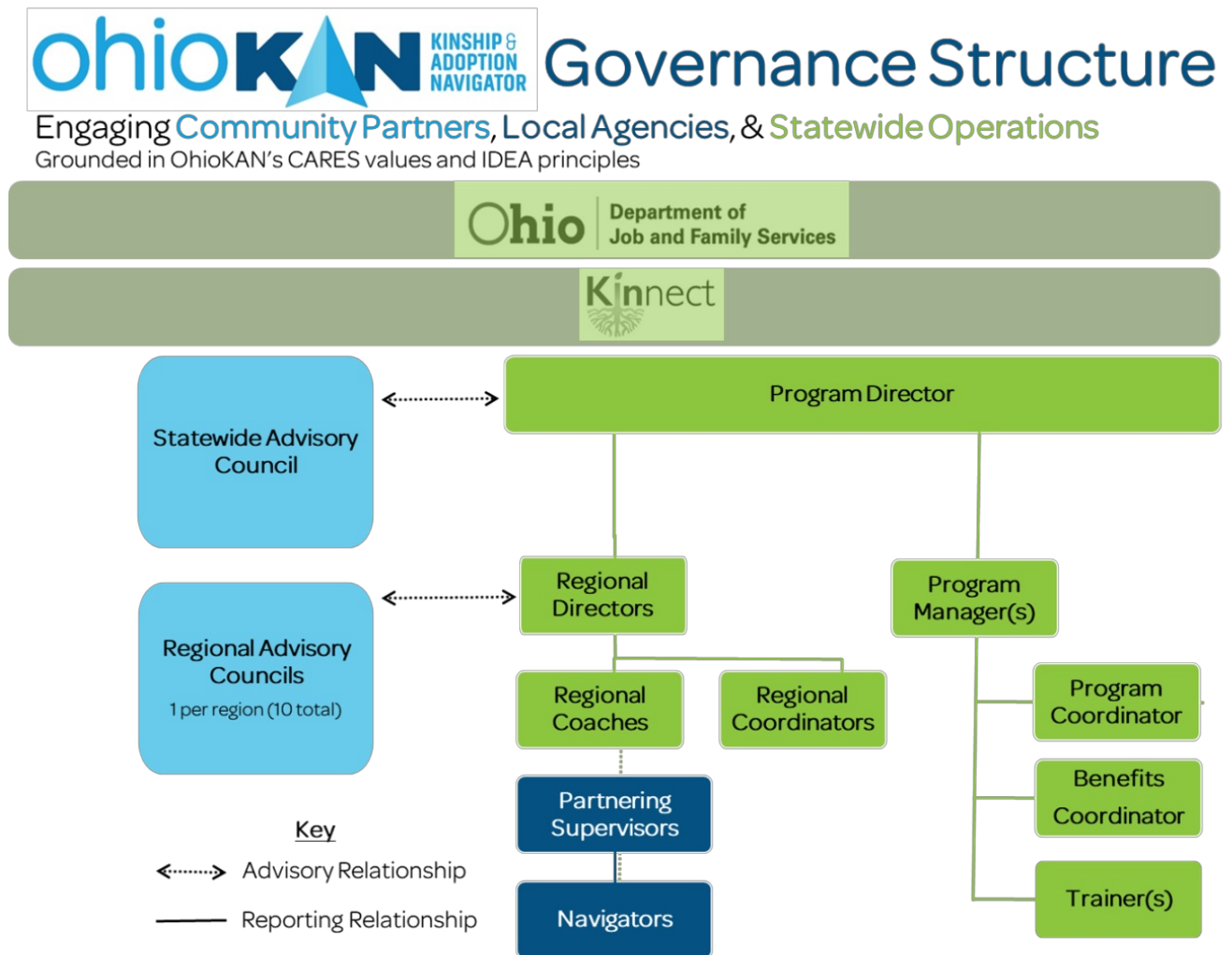


**Chapter 4 : Partnerships with the Community**

**Governance Structure**

The following is a description of OhioKAN's governance structure and approach to community partnerships tailored to the Ohio context. The OhioKAN Governance Structure was developed by the nonprofit community organization, Kinnect, in partnership with Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The Governance Structure includes the engagement of community partners, local agencies, and statewide operations all grounded in OhioKAN's CARES values and IDEA principles. The light green boxes indicate the governing agency, ODJFS, and the implementing agency, Kinnect. Below in light blue are the entities established for community partnerships, specifically Regional Advisory Councils with one council per region and a Statewide Advisory Council. Membership of all councils includes intentional engagement of community members with lived experience as kinship caregivers and/or adoptive parents. The darker green boxes indicate the Kinnect program staff that partner with the staff employed by local agencies indicated by the dark blue boxes. Kinnect program staff such as the Program Director, Regional Directors, Coaches and Regional Coordinators all work either directly or indirectly with partnered site staff such as the Partnering Supervisors and Navigators. Coaches work directly with Navigators to support service delivery and continuous quality improvement.

Image



*Figure 4. The above visual includes the OhioKAN Governance Structure, a visual that demonstrates the relationships between both internal and external stakeholders involved in the implementation and delivery of the OhioKAN program.*

**Statewide Operations**

The non-profit organization, Kinnect, and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) partnered together to convene a formal management structure to attend to the day-to-day operations of the program's implementation, fidelity to the model, and sustainability. Kinnect is the statewide implementing provider organization of the OhioKAN program model. The management structure includes ODJFS funding and agency staff embedded in the initial and ongoing implementation support efforts such as

project and implementation teams. ODJFS staff support the Kinnect staff by providing expertise and guidance in areas such as program development, implementation, and management of the statewide data system (SACWIS).

The OhioKAN program is delivered statewide and administered regionally via ten OhioKAN regions. These geographic regions were developed as part of the initial program design, based on statewide stakeholder recommendations, Ohio census data, and county-reported population data. Each region is supported by a Regional Director with the guidance of a Regional Advisory Council, consisting of local providers and leaders within that region. Kinnect includes a set of program staff to support the OhioKAN model. Such staff include a Program Director, Program Manager(s), Program Coordinator, Program Trainer(s), Regional Directors, Regional Coaches and Regional Coordinators. You can find staff practice profiles in the 'Staffing Resources' section and staff position descriptions in the Appendix.

## Local Site Agencies

Kinnect chose to contract with local agencies to work with established organizations that have a good reputation and credibility in the community to deliver the OhioKAN program model. Selected community organizations and county agencies hire, supervise, and support Kinship and Adoption Navigators. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Kinnect procures services from community organizations to provide navigation services to kinship and adoptive families. These navigators receive regular coaching on the OhioKAN practice model and report to a partnering supervisor within their agency who works closely with OhioKAN regional staff to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity and is offering exemplary customer service.

## Advisory Councils

The OhioKAN program model is supported by community partners in both a Statewide Advisory Council and a set of Regional Advisory Councils. The advisory councils support the implementation of the OhioKAN program model and the execution of the community pathway of the theory of change. In partnership with OhioKAN staff, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and the OhioKAN Regional Advisory Councils, the OhioKAN State Advisory Council works to ensure that a robust, tailored, and continuously improving service array and system-level supports are available across Ohio.

### ***State Advisory Council***

The State Advisory Council plays a critical role in developing awareness of kinship and adoptive families and building system-level capacity to support them in a consistent and equitable manner state-wide. The role of this advisory council is to advise OhioKAN on communication about critical state-wide service gaps and system barriers impacting kinship and adoptive families, as well as strategize the dissemination of this information to key stakeholders. The Council facilitates connections and problem-solving regarding identified service gaps, system barriers, and resource needs to promote family well-being, prevent entry into foster care, and other areas that are identified to support the sustainability of the OhioKAN program. The focus on an equitable distribution of service and system supports across the state is rooted in the six key principles of Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Access, which include the continued analysis of historical factors; the distribution of resources and access to opportunity for families in ways that promote equity and support transformational change; ensure conditions for health, safety and economic security; and actively disrupt the perpetuation of institutional discrimination and oppression. The OhioKAN State Advisory Council is a space for state-level change-agents, subject-matter experts, senior leaders, and innovative thinkers to gather, explore new ideas, and tackle systemic issues on behalf of Ohio's kinship and adoptive families.

### ***Regional Advisory Council***

Each Regional Advisory Council identifies existing programs and services that support kinship and adoptive families, determine how existing programs and services should be enhanced to best support the OhioKAN model, and identify service gaps and how those gaps should be addressed. Participants may include community organizations and stakeholders such as individuals with lived experience, caregivers, faith community leaders, area offices on aging, housing organizations, local nonprofits, managed care organizations and schools. The Regional Advisory Council plays a critical role in developing awareness of kinship and adoptive families and building community capacity to support them. In partnership with the OhioKAN Regional Director, the Council will help identify existing programs and services that support kinship and adoptive families. They determine how existing programs, services, and practices should be enhanced to best support the OhioKAN model. They identify service and practice gaps for kinship and adoptive families and how those gaps should be addressed. The identification of service gaps is rooted in the six key principles of Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Access, which include the continued analysis of historical factors; the distribution of resources and access to opportunity for families in ways that promote equity and support transformational change; ensure conditions for health; safety and economic security; and actively disrupt the perpetuation of institutional discrimination and oppression. The council provides recommendations on behalf of the region for needed services and resources to prevent entry into foster care and any other areas that are identified to support the sustainability for the regional OhioKAN program.