

Chapter 4 : Partnerships with the Community

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.