

## BY THE NUMBERS



**1 in 14**  
**children**  
is the product of a **grandfamily**



W.Va. is fourth in the nation  
for grandparents raising grandchildren



**43 grandparents**  
completed the program

**97.6%**  
reported being **better prepared**  
to raise their grandchildren

Reported **"lack of sleep"** as a problem  
decreased by **13.8%**

Reported **living a healthy lifestyle**  
increased by **9.3%**

Reported their **overall health**  
increased by **4.6%**

# IMPACT

## HEALTHY GRANDFAMILIES

Through an innovative series of educational discussions and follow-up social work services, West Virginia State University is helping to ease the transition for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

### SITUATION

The prevalence of grandfamilies is on the rise across the country, especially in West Virginia, which ranks fourth in the nation for the percentage of grandparents raising one or more of their grandchildren. In fact, research shows that 1 in 14 children is the product of a grandfamily home. While vital to the wellbeing of their families, grandparents often find themselves struggling with being a 21st century parent, citing issues faced by today's youth with which they have no experience in handling, from current educational standards to social media activity.

### RESPONSE

Funded by a \$600,000 grant from the USDA's 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program, the Healthy Grandfamilies program combines a series of nine innovative discussion sessions on a variety of timely topics with three months of follow-up services with a licensed social worker. Topics range from social media to navigating the school and legal systems to healthy literacy and others.

### RESULTS

Throughout its first year, 43 grandparents (raising a total of 90 grandchildren) completed the program, reporting a greater understanding of modern-day parenting, with multiple nods to the friendships and relationships they've formed and the comfort of feeling less alone in their situation.

More than 97 percent reported being better prepared to raise their grandchildren and would recommend the program to others. Surveys showed improvements on a wide range of variables, including an increase from 6.85 to 8.15 (on a 1-10 scale) in knowledge of parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a 6.33 to 8.63 increase in knowledge of strategies to improve family relationships.

Participants reported improved health after participating in the project. The percent who reported their overall health as being "good" or "excellent" increased from 55.8 percent to 60.4 percent; those reporting "lack of sleep" as a problem decreased from 53.3 percent to 39.5 percent; and the percent reporting living a healthy lifestyle increased from 83.7 percent to 93 percent.

Learn more: [wvstateu.edu/extension](http://wvstateu.edu/extension)



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