



ANNUAL REPORT



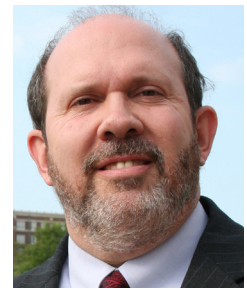
2014

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families has always done a good job of changing with the times. As we've watched the political climate in Arkansas shift over the past couple of years, we've responded with our own changes as well.

Over the past year we've created a full-time governmental affairs position in order to devote more resources to educating policymakers. We've added a Health Outreach Policy Fellow to make sure Arkansans know about affordable coverage options available to them through the Private Option and Arkansas's Health Insurance Marketplace. Our education work has expanded and now includes the help of an Education Policy Fellow, a position we've created with the help of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C.

On a personal note, this year marked my tenth year as Executive Director. It's been my pleasure to be a part of this organization and the vital work that it does for the state. Although the political landscape has changed, I feel we're as well-suited as we've ever been to help Arkansas kids. We don't know exactly what challenges will come with the new year. But rest assured, AACF is at the ready to be a voice for the children of Arkansas.



Executive Director
Rich Huddleston

Rich Huddleston

2014 AACF PUBLICATIONS

Paying a Living Wage Will Make Arkansas A Better Place to Live and Work

Income Inequality is Hurting Arkansas

Why Detention is Not Always the Answer: A closer look at youth lock-up in Arkansas

Fighting Unemployment Will Boost Arkansas's Economy

What You Should Know About Common Core State Standards

A Parent's Guide to Arkansas Common Core State Standards

The Truth About Common Core Testing and Student Privacy

2014 Voter's Guide

Getting In: Improving consumer-friendly enrollment in Arkansas

Reducing the Number of Children Who Enter the Foster Care System

Reducing a Child's Time in Foster Care

A Boost for Working Families: How the EITC Helps Arkansans, and Our Economy

Keeping Arkansans Covered: How Changes to the Private Option Could Impact Families

Insuring Arkansas's Children: Next Steps in the ARKids First Program

Connectors to Coverage

From Playgrounds to Prisons

5 Things You Should Know About Pre-K in Arkansas

Creating a Prosperous Future: Reducing Poverty in Arkansas

Budget Surpluses in Arkansas

Legislative Interim Study on Pre-K in Arkansas

Infographic: Income Inequality Needs a Tune-up

Infographic: Houston, the Poverty Line has a Problem

Infographic: Common Core in Arkansas





ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 2014 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A leading voice on health coverage

This was a monumental year in Arkansas as we saw significant improvements in access to affordable health coverage for families. As enrollment increased through the Private Option and Health Insurance Marketplace, Arkansas emerged as a national leader. With over 220,000 people approved for Private Option coverage, we markedly reduced the rate of uninsured adults from 22 percent last year to 12.5 percent halfway through 2014. We also celebrated 32,000 children enrolling in affordable coverage along with their caregivers at our “Superheroes for ARKids First” press conference in the spring.



Gov. Mike Beebe stopped by our press conference celebrating the success of ARKids First.

In 2014, we continued to engage a broad base of partners to protect coverage for children and families through our coalition work. During the 2014 fiscal session, the General Assembly again voted to appropriate funding for the Private Option. Despite some opposition, the legislature obtained the needed 75 percent approval in each house. Although the annual re-appropriation was a major victory, new restrictions on state agencies were adopted preventing use of public funds for health care outreach and enrollment. To help fill the outreach gap, AACF and several partner organizations launched Arkansans for Coverage, a network to support enrollment assisters with technical assistance and outreach resources and materials.

Closing the achievement gap in education

Efforts to secure more funding for the state’s pre-K program in the 2014 fiscal session, while unsuccessful, set the stage for the battle ahead in the 2015 legislative session. AACF wrote and presented an interim study on early childhood education to lawmakers. Our work with the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading culminated in the release of five pre-K videos which helped shaped the debate at the State Capitol. New supporters are being developed through new social media strategies like Thunderclap and Storify. Our constant drumbeat of messaging around the pre-K funding issue has made its way into local news coverage.

Other education work revolved around closing the achievement gap for underperforming students. AACF was on board as the Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign held a successful Summit in October to share education information with parents across the state. AACF successfully worked to get the Academic Facilities Oversight Committee to recommend study of inequities in school facilities across the state. Their report



Videos produced by the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading were widely shared on social media.

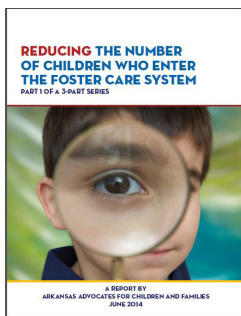
was accepted by the education committees as part of the educational adequacy study. The first state school discipline report was released in July as required by AACF's school discipline legislation in 2013. AACF developed a set of materials for parent information and met with parent groups on Common Core State Standards.

Championing after-school and summer programs

Efforts to convince policy makers and communities of the importance of these programs, and to provide money to fund the Positive Youth Development Grant Program Act, continue. This year the Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research endorsed quality after-school and summer programs as an effective way to reduce the education achievement gap. It suggested that the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) funds designed to close the education achievement gap be used for these programs in school districts across the state. AACF, the Arkansas Out-of-School Network, and the Northwest Arkansas Council, held a "study circle" process designed to get the community involved in discussions about afterschool and summer programs. The study circles were conducted in English, Spanish and Marshallese, and included business leaders, educators, activists, parents, students, law enforcement, elected officials, and service providers.

Reforming the juvenile justice system

AACF staff continues its campaign to reserve incarceration for youthful offenders who pose a serious risk to public safety by expanding proven effective community based alternatives to incarceration. AACF staff served on the Arkansas Supreme Courts Commission on Children, Youth and Families' Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice Reform, participated in the Interim Study on Juvenile Justice Reform and served as a member of the Division of Youth Services Stakeholder Cabinet. All of these venues have now adopted recommendations or principles that suggest reforms which will accelerate enactment of this key policy change within Arkansas.



AACF launched a three-part series of reports on the child welfare system in Arkansas.

Reporting on child welfare

AACF released two reports on the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) efforts to implement a demonstration waiver from the federal government which will allow DCFS to redirect current funding. The goals of the waiver are to: (1) safely reduce the number of children entering foster care, (2) reduce the time spent in foster care, and (3) increase the stability of a child's placement in foster care. During fiscal year 2014, there were 4,106 children in foster care. The two reports covered the first two goals and examined data from DCFS before the waiver was implemented along with describing the initiatives that DCFS will implement.

Fighting for a fair tax and budget system

AACF continues to prioritize increased financial stability for hardworking Arkansans and a fair and adequate tax structure. The final state budget passed during the fiscal session included about \$89 million in savings due to the adoption of the Private Option health insurance exchange. Despite the savings from the Private Option and nearly \$79 million in surplus general revenues, the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Youth Services – agencies that provide critical services to vulnerable children – saw no new funding. In 2014, AACF released infographics and blog pieces on issues like growing income inequality in Arkansas, wage theft, and the need for a state Earned Income Tax Credit and a higher minimum wage. In the November election, voters approved a ballot initiative to increase the minimum wage in Arkansas to \$7.50 in 2015, \$8.00 in 2016, and \$8.50 in 2017.

Carrying out AACF's mission in northwest Arkansas

All the priorities of AACF — from child welfare and juvenile justice to education and health — are the focus of our northwest Arkansas office based in Springdale. AACF's only satellite office continues to provide a critical voice in a region with growing political clout. In the summer, we increased our staff capacity with a part-time position. While our work in northwest Arkansas covers the wide range of AACF's issues, the office includes a special emphasis on improving the public understanding of the benefits of public investment. In 2014, we worked to raise regional awareness of after school programs and high-quality pre-K as well as immigrant children's access to health care. Partnerships with the United Way of Northwest Arkansas and service providers strengthened AACF's influence in the region.



AACF events in northwest Arkansas were a draw for advocates as well as lawmakers.

Reaching out

The Arkansas Kids Count Coalition is “the collective force shaping public policy for children and families in Arkansas.” The coalition hosted Policy Café events in Malvern, Jonesboro, Little Rock, and Hot Springs. In Fayetteville, the coalition held a Children's Advocacy Summit, during which participants examined policy issues and received training in advocacy skills, such as issue selection, coalition building, legislative activities, electoral politics, strategic communications, and other advocacy strategies.

In preparation for the 2015 legislative session, the coalition also sponsored pre-legislative conferences in Jonesboro (in partnership with Enroll the Ridge), northwest Arkansas, and Little Rock. Nearly 250 participants attended the conferences, which featured legislative and media panel discussions, as well as presentations by AACF staff members and other policy experts.

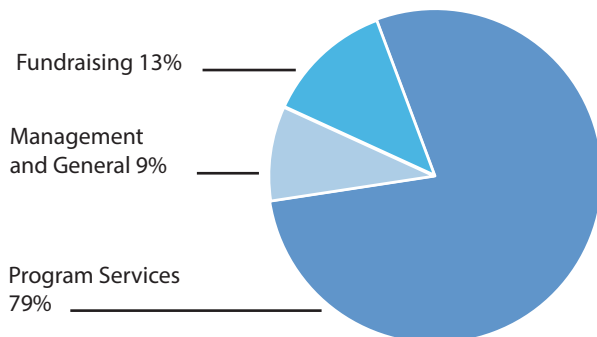


2014 AACF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

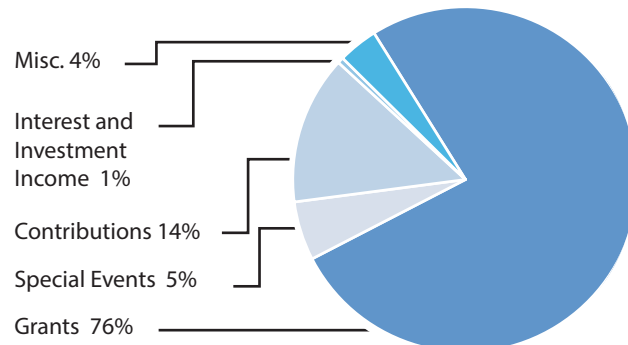
Total Revenue & Support.....	\$2,001,162
Total Expenses.....	1,880,224
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	120,938
Decrease in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets.....	162,481
Change in Net Assets.....	283,419
Net Assets, Beginning of Year.....	902,322
Net Assets, End of Year.....	1,185,741

For the Year Ended December 31, 2014, From audited financials prepared by Thomas and Thomas LLP

EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT





2104 AACF Board of Directors

2014 FUNDERS

Grant Funders (\$5,000 and more)

Annie E. Casey Foundation	Fred Darragh Foundation	Schott Foundation for Public Education
Arkansas Public Policy Panel	Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation	Second Presbyterian Church
Center on Budget & Policy Priorities	Nathan Dalton Whetstone Endowment for Arkansas/ACF	Southern Education Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Public Welfare Foundation	Stoneman Family Foundation
Community Catalyst, Inc.	Riggs Benevolent Fund	The New World Foundation
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative		Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Organization Donors (\$1,000 and more)

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Adventure Subaru	Catlett Law Firm	Mercy Northwest Arkansas
Ambetter of Arkansas	Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus	Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates & Woodyard, PLLC
American Academy of Pediatrics, Arkansas Chapter	Delta Dental of Arkansas	Munro Foundation
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield	Endeavor Foundation	Nabholz Construction Services
Arkansas Community Foundation	Entergy	Olds Foundation
Arkansas Children's Hospital	Friday, Eldredge & Clark	Pro-Kids Therapy, LLC
Arkansas Education Association	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Southern Bancorp
Arkansas Hospital Association	Innovative Solutions for Educational Partnerships	The Schmieding Foundation
Arkansas Minority Health Commission	Legacy Termite and Pest Control, Inc.	UAMS Department of Pediatrics
Bank of the Ozarks	Little Rock Pediatric Group, P.A.	United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas
C. Louis & Mary C. Cabe Foundation	Mathews Management Company	Walmart Foundation

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AACF Executive Director Rich Huddleston, with winners Rep. Darrin Williams and Justice Robert Brown.

2014 FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AWARD RECIPIENTS

Supreme Court Justice Robert Brown

Representative Darrin Williams

ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 2014 STAFF

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Deputy Director

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Outreach Director

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Development Director

Eleanor Wheeler

Senior Policy Analyst



AACF staff



www.aradvocates.org

The mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential.



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