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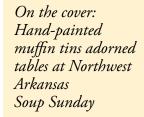
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Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

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Learn more at www.aradvocates.org





aradvocates.org

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families' (AACF) mission has always been 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.

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic strain highlighted the importance of our work on behalf of kids and low-income families. Having access to health insurance, paid sick leave and economic security are things many of us may have taken for granted. We must put better policies in place to ensure that all Arkansans can access critical programs when they need them.

In 2020, the racial disparities seen in the COVID-19 pandemic — both in health outcomes and the financial crisis — and the killing of Black people around the country, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, resulted in a national reckoning of racism and inequity. We must do more to address structural racism in America, and there are changes we can make now.

From the very onset of the pandemic, we tracked state and federal policy responses to the virus. We continued our diligent efforts to provide research-based policy analysis and recommendations for Arkansas's lawmakers and fellow advocates on a range of topics. We focused on both short-term and long-term policies, to better position Arkansas's families for success throughout the pandemic and once it is over.



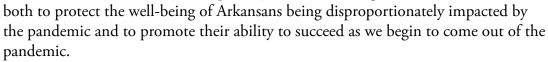
For example, we worked for months with state and national partners to push for the second round of federal COVID-19 relief legislation that was included in the omnibus spending bill that passed in late 2020. We directly lobbied our members of Congress, organized a sign-on letter, posted consistent social media messages and sent action alerts. We asked lawmakers to pass meaningful legislation that would help those most impacted. And we advocated for the inclusion of critical provisions, such as aid to state and local governments, eviction protections and rental assistance, increased SNAP benefits, childcare assistance and extended jobless benefits.

Understandably, fundraising looked very different in 2020, both in terms of foundation funding and individual gifts. As a result, we had to do more advocacy this year with fewer resources, which placed unprecedented demands on our staff.

The pandemic also changed how we did our advocacy work. The need to advocate virtually posed major challenges for us. We could not meet face-to-face, neither internally with our board and staff nor externally with our partners and policymakers. We could not attend meetings at the Capitol, which meant we were not in the room when important decisions were made; nor could we directly and personally engage in ways that have proven beneficial in the past.

To keep our friends and supporters abreast of Arkansas's response to the pandemic, we published a weekly, then biweekly, email newsletter. And we maintained a list of pandemic-related resources for Arkansans around the state.

As we do every other year, we worked with our board and our partners to develop a legislative agenda for the 2021 session of the Arkansas General Assembly. Our primary focus was on legislation



Most importantly, we took care of our team, with all AACF staff working from home for the duration of 2020. We modified our policies to best support staff if they became ill with the virus, had to take care of a family member who had fallen ill, or who had children at home during work hours. We added a weekly informal staff meeting and enjoyed learning more about each other from a distance.

As we publish this annual report, the pandemic is ongoing, though we can see light at the end of the tunnel. We will remain vigilant in our efforts, as sound policies are needed more than ever. All of us at AACF are thankful for your interest our work. Our advocacy efforts are stronger because of friends and supporters like you.

Sincerely,

Rich Huddleston

Rich Buddleston

AACF leads workshops on how to advocate.

COVID-19

& Policy

Update

To schedule a training for your group call 501-371-9678 or email connect@ aradvocates.org.

LETTER FROM THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Dear AACF Donors and Future Donors.

During 2020, people came together (virtually!) to stand up, help out and give back. In times of uncertainty, generosity can bring the world together.

We live in a generous state. Arkansans care about our neighbors. During 2020, as the pandemic hurt the physical and economic well-being of people across our state, individuals and companies realized our work for racial equity and social justice was more important than ever.

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families works with our partners and conducts research to identify policy changes that will transform the everyday lives of our friends and neighbors who have been left out for too long. Thanks to your help, we continue to partner with advocates across the state to push for that change.

EVERY ARKANSAS FAMILY DESERVES:

- To live in a home with food in the refrigerator and internet access
- For their children to get a quality education in a safe environment, with nutritious meals at school
- Affordable, accessible and quality health care
- Financial security, including access to affordable necessities like housing, transportation, childcare, groceries, and being able to save for retirement and emergencies
- To be vital, participating members of their community, our state political process, and our democracy

Thank you to our donors for helping build a vibrant, equitable, sustainable Arkansas for kids and families for years to come.

Fran Carter Development Director

Missy Darwin Kincaid Northwest Arkansas Development Director

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Annual unrestricted funding gives AACF the flexibility to work on new and emerging issues as they arise. It also provides more resources for building coalitions and lobbying on behalf of children at the state Capitol. Your support positions us to be even more effective advocates for Arkansas's families. Visit aradvocates.org/donate to learn more.



Good policy can make an immediate impact on children and families, but the work to enact it can take years.

When I make a monthly gift to Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, I know my gift supports the hard work that takes place month after month to create transformational change in the lives of Arkansas families. As a child, I benefited from government-sponsored programs that helped my mother make ends meet. As a mother now muself, this monthly gift is my investment in the future of other Arkansas families. Eva Terry **AACF Supporter**

2020 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RACIAL EQUITY

The year 2020 will be remembered not only for the pandemic, but also for the high-profile killings of Black people – in several cases, by White law enforcement officers – and the resulting Black Lives Matter protests around the country and our state.

Spurred on by the already evident need for racially equitable policies and outcomes, AACF continued our efforts to advance equity within our organization and within our external sphere of influence.

2020 RACE EQUITY MILESTONES

- Worked with consultants to develop and begin conducting a race equity audit of our internal policies and procedures to promote a strong focus on equity in the internal management of the organization
- Developed a new framework to make equity a greater focus of the process by which we conduct our policy analysis, policy development and agenda setting, and public engagement
- Worked with external grassroots partners (the Arkansas Public Policy Panel, Arkansas United, the Social Justice Institute, and the Rural Community Alliance) to form the Arkansas Equal Voices Network, which is focused on promoting race equity in public policy and power building by grassroots organizations and state-level policy groups

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While 2020 brought challenges none of us expected, AACF stayed connected with our partners throughout the state to identify problems facing families and resources to assist them through the crisis, which we shared in COVID-19 and policy newsletters. And as we prepared our 2021 legislative agenda, AACF's policy staff met virtually with partners to identify the most pressing needs and policy solutions they saw for children and families in our state.



The Arkansas Kids Count Coalition, coordinated by AACF Community Engagement Director Rebecca Zimmermann, quickly shifted strategy and, after having only three in-person events, hosted the remaining 17 events virtually with more than 790 participants in 2020. In our meetings we discussed a wide range of issues, including children's mental health, COVID-19, advocacy and racial equity, giving advocates across the state the opportunity to learn from and connect with their peers.

AACF Racial Equity Statement

At AACF, our racial equity focus aligns our mission and stated values with our organizational practices and programs. We recognize that structural inequity has been embedded in our national and state culture and policies and has had a lasting effect, as seen today in disparities in children's outcomes across race and many other identities. AACF believes in intentionally engaging diverse perspectives throughout our work. We are committed to amplifying the voices and wisdom of those most directly affected by systemic oppression, with a focus on building a more equitable and inclusive Arkansas to truly serve every child and family.

HEALTH

Our AACF health policy team focused mainly on COVID-19 related activities, including participation in local, state, and national forums, conferences, and coalitions. We increased our monitoring of federal policy and made recommendations for the state and federal COVID-19 relief packages. AACF provided guidance on how to interpret the Families First COVID Relief Act and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act policy changes to safety net programs.



The pandemic further exposed the stark health disparities in Arkansas. Our health equity work included making specific recommendations to inform the state's agenda to address social determinants of health. Partners in our work included the Arkansas COVID-19 Health Equity Response Team, ACES Coalition of Arkansas, Arkansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Natural Wonders Partnership for Children.

A significant relief in 2020 was that the court continued to strike down the work-reporting requirements on Arkansas's Medicaid expansion program, Arkansas Works. Because of this, thousands of Arkansans, who otherwise might not have, likely retained their health insurance coverage during the pandemic.

EDUCATION

Much of our education work during 2020 focused on shaping the state's education response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of an analysis we released in April of provisions in the federal CARES Act, AACF issued a series of recommendations related to the spending of new federal relief aid. We supported recommendations of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association calling for spending CARES Act funding to protect the health of Arkansas's families and the financial, programmatic and human infrastructure, and quality of the state's early childhood system so it could better meet the needs of families and early childhood programs once the pandemic was over. On the K-12 front, AACF and our partners called for the development of a proactive strategy that would help close inequities in educational outcomes and opportunities that were expected to worsen during the pandemic for certain groups, including Black and Brown students, students with special education needs and English Language Learners.

In September, AACF joined with other education groups — including the Southern Education Foundation, the Education Law Center, the Arkansas Citizens First Congress, and others — in submitting a letter to the Arkansas General Assembly highlighting major problems with the Arkansas Succeed Scholarship Program, the state-funded K-12 school voucher program. The letter was in response to a new evaluation report on the Succeed Scholarship Program by the Bureau of Legislative Research that outlined major issues in program accountability, transparency and student outcomes.

AACF called for a proactive strategy that would help close inequities in educational outcomes and opportunities.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Our juvenile justice work in 2020 had two primary areas of focus. After working to secure major juvenile justice reform legislation in 2019, AACF followed that work in 2020 by attempting to monitor implementation of the new law, but our efforts were hampered by the COVID pandemic.

The other priority for our juvenile justice work in 2020 was a new effort to eliminate fees for juvenile court services and fines imposed by juvenile courts on the families of children in the juvenile justice system. These fees and fines have a disproportionate economic impact on low-income families and Black and Brown families, can increase recidivism, and create barriers that prevent youth from successfully leaving the juvenile system and reintegrating into their communities.

Working with staff from the Law Clinic at University of California-Berkeley, AACF and Disability Rights Arkansas submitted a detailed letter to the Arkansas Supreme Court urging them to use their administrative authority and/or influence with juvenile court judges to stop imposing, eliminate or reduce the use of juvenile court fees and fines. While this effort was unsuccessful, it formed the basis for a campaign during the 2021 state legislative session to introduce legislation with the aim of eliminating the use of juvenile court fees (and some fines).

TAX AND BUDGET + ECONOMIC SECURITY

During 2020, AACF engaged with our federal delegation, advocating for more state and local relief, expanded unemployment benefits, rental relief and direct stimulus payments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We helped analyze the impact of federal legislation on Arkansas and worked with partners to do virtual outreach and engagement to ensure that everyone who qualified was able to claim their economic impact payment.



We made sure that the need for a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) stayed on the minds of policymakers by highlighting the intersections between EITCs and health with our partners at Children's HealthWatch, with an event discussing our Health Impact Assessment on a potential state EITC.

FOOD SECURITY

Arkansas already had very high food insecurity rates compared to other states. Even before the pandemic, Arkansas had the nation's second-highest child food insecurity rate. But the pandemic created a hunger crisis, with 150,000 Arkansans becoming newly food insecure in 2020 (for a total of more than 600,000), according to estimates by Feeding America, with the child food insecurity rate jumping to 32.2 percent.

AACF worked to call attention to the fact that state policies made the crisis worse with punishing rules that make it harder for families to put food on the table. In our July report, Food Insecurity in Arkansas, we outlined a number of policies that have

weakened the safety net to the point that it wouldn't hold when families needed it most. For example, we are one of only 10 states that has the nation's strictest "asset limits" on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This policy forces families to choose between nutrition and building their economic security with even modest savings accounts. Together with partners, we successfully encouraged the state to take full advantage of pandemic hunger relief, such as ensuring that immigrant children received one-time pandemic SNAP benefits for the first time.

CENSUS

The 2020 Census was a census like no other. AACF's census efforts were aimed at ensuring that young children, who have been historically undercounted, were not missed in the census in 2020.

The pandemic turned on its head the outreach and communications strategy that AACF and its partners had planned. Our work shifted to encouraging local Complete Count Committees, school districts, early childhood providers, and other organizations working with children to push online communications encouraging families to not only complete the census, but to ensure that they counted all children living in their household.

We partnered with Arkansas Counts to create a back-to-school communications toolkit that providers and schools could easily copy, paste and download to share messages with families. And with shifting deadlines and changes in census processes, we communicated with partners and local Complete Count Committees to alert them of updates to procedures and to make the best of the confusion created by the federal administration. The Arkansas Counts network did excellent work to spread the word about the census and encourage participation despite many challenges.

PROGRESS IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Though the year was the toughest in memory in many ways, 2020 ended on a very high note in our Northwest Arkansas office. The federal coronavirus relief package signed into law in December included a change that made Marshallese migrants eligible for Medicaid coverage for the first time since 1996. It was the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy for our Northwest Arkansas team and our local partner organizations, who worked alongside fierce national advocates from Hawaii to Washington, D.C.

Our Northwest Arkansas team worked throughout the year to ensure that children of immigrants weren't left out of our state and national response to the health and economic crises. Too many children were "lost" when schools were forced to close in March, not showing up on virtual classes at all. We worked to call attention to their unique needs, from the state's work to reach children with pandemic meal replacements, to our partnerships with community organizations to make sure that all children were counted in the 2020 Census.

ARKANSAS UNITED

10 minutes of

your time will

affect the next 10 years of their lives!

44-330-2020

COUNT

YOUR KIDS

Generous donors to our record-setting Northwest Arkansas Soup Sunday, which took place before the start of the pandemic, helped ensure that our work could continue in the region even as an economic crisis became worse.

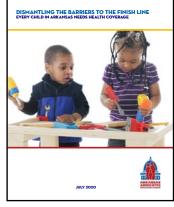
COMMUNICATIONS

In 2020, AACF published 76 blog posts, sent 22 press releases, hosted 12 Facebook live videos, created 24 social media videos, and sent 61 e-newsletters.

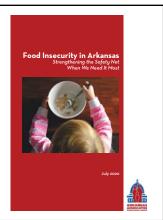
Our staff and communications products were mentioned in local, statewide, national, and even international media nearly 200 times in 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

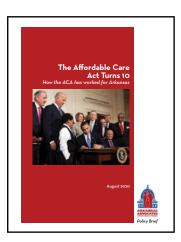




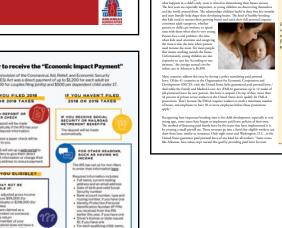








Paid Family Leave:



2020 Digital **Followers**

Twitter 6,116 Facebook 9,578 Instagram 1,314

SOUP SUNDAY

LITTLE ROCK



Kimberly and Ryan Davis, 2020 Little Rock Soup Sunday co-chairs



Little Rock Golden Ladle winner, The Faded Rose, represented by Mason Hargett and Chef Zac David



AACF Board Members Dr. Aaron Strong and Dr. Chad Rodgers, with Anna Strong

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS



NWA Soup Sunday Chair Meredith Lowry, Ruthie Bradley Weyland, Rachael DeBoard



Northwest Arkansas Golden Ladle winner, Local Lime, represented by Jarrod Johnson and Maleni Albarran



Volunteer Quintin Canada, AACF NWA Development Director Missy Darwin Kincaid, Volunteer Julianna Munden

We were so fortunate to be able to host both our Northwest Arkansas and Little Rock Soup Sunday events before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. It was a joy to see everyone who came together to support our work. We look forward to seeing you all again!

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN ANNUAL LUNCHEON



Friend of Children Honoree Judge Joyce Warren with her award



Friend of Children Honoree Betty Guhman with her award

Below: AACF Board Member Martie North recording her emcee duties



Esther Bullard, daughter of Friend of Children Honoree, the late John W. Walker

ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Friends of Children Annual Luncheon

2020 Honorees

Betty Guhman

Morril Harriman

Judge Joyce Williams Warren John W. Walker (1937-2019) Thank you for your support!





Friend of Children Honoree Morril Harriman receiving his lunch



2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Gary Wheeler, M.D.

VICE PRESIDENT

Ryan D. Davis

SECRETARY

Martie North

TREASURER

Danyelle Walker, J.D.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Joseph (Hank) Bates, III, J.D.

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Shannon Collier-Tenison, Ph.D.

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Tamara Pace-Glover, Ph.D.

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Chad Rodgers, M.D.

William (Bill) Schwab, Ph.D.

Aaron Strong, M.D.

Stacey Sturner

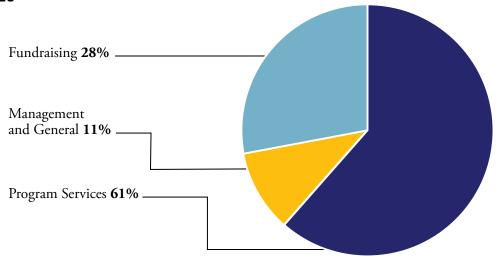
Pastor Dwight Townsend

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

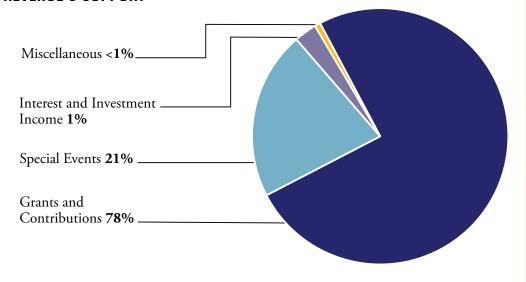
Total Revenue & Support	1,589,342
Total Expenses	1,514,435
Increase in Net Assets without Donor Restriction	74,907
Increase in Net Assets with Donor Restriction	(30,312)
Increase in Net Assets	44,595
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	1,641,174
Net Assets, End of Year	1,685,769
For the Veer Ended December 31, 2020	

For the Year Ended December 31, 2020 From audited financials prepared by Landmark PLC

EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT



2020 FUNDERS

GRANT FUNDERS \$5,000+

Alliance for Early Success American Heart Association Annie E. Casey Foundation Arkansas Community Foundation Asset Funders Network Charles Stewart Mott Foundation David & Lucile Packard Foundation Earned Income Tax Credit Policy Development Fund Fred Darragh Foundation Marguerite Casey Foundation MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger Partnership for America's Children The Walmart Foundation, Inc. W.K. Kellogg Foundation Windgate Foundation

ORGANIZATIONS \$5,000+

Anne Fund/ACF Arkansas Children's Hospital The Bradberry Foundation Delta Dental of Arkansas **Excellerate Foundation** Hunt Ventures Mercy Health System NWA The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas Nathan Dalton Whetsone Endowment for Arkansas Children's Charities/ ACFSecond Presbyterian Church

ORGANIZATIONS \$1,000 TO \$4,999 AllCare Pharmacy Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield Arkansas Community Foundation Arkansas Department of Human Services Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation Arkansas Family Dental Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care Arkansas Health and Wellness Arkansas Hospital Association Bank of Fayetteville/Farmers & Merchants Bank C. Louis & Mary C. Cabe Foundation Clothes to Children Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus, P.C.

Entergy Arkansas Garver USA Goodyear

Law Office of Danyelle Walker, PLLC Legacy Termite and Pest Control, Inc. Little Rock Pediatric Group, P.A. McMath Woods, P.A. Mihalevich Real Estate, LLC Mitchell Williams Law Firm Munro Foundation

Olds Foundation Ozarks Electric Cooperative/Ozarks Go

Roger and Patty Harness Family Foundation

Schmieding Foundation

Simmons Bank Southwest Power Pool

Springwoods Behavioral Health

The Starr Foundation

Sysco Arkansas, Inc. Underwoods Fine Jewelers

Victims' Rights Arkansas

Washington Regional Medical Center Willard & Pat Walker Charitable

Foundation

William H. Bowen Family Foundation Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP

2020 FUNDERS, CONTINUED

INDIVIDUALS \$1,000+

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Lois Alward

Drs. Tracy and Katherine Baltz

Dr. Jay Barth and Mr. Charles Cliett, Jr.

Pamela and Kelvin Buncum

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Megan Crozier

Beverly and Gary Darwin

Drs. Kay and John DuVal

Dr. Nikki Edge

Jennifer and Todd Ferguson

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Susan Hardin and Barry Haas

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Dr. Leslie Landrum and Dr. Paul

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Stephanie Lewis

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Cathy Cole Seilhan and Denton Seilhan/

The Boston Foundation

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Jana and Chris Villemez

Mary Ellen Vogler

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Jack Williams and Jay Sledge

Kirk Wilson

Jeremiah and Emily Wood

Linda L. Wray

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For more on issues important to children and families, visit aradvocates.org





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