



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) had a noteworthy 2022! We celebrated AACF's 45th year of operation throughout the year, sharing highlights of the organization's history and looking forward to what a shared future vision for Arkansas might look like.



In March, then-Executive Director Rich Huddleston announced his plans to depart the organization by the end of the year. We cannot thank Rich enough for the dedication, passion and vision he gave AACF for 27 years, the last 18 of which were spent as Executive Director. Much of the remainder of the year found a transition committee, composed of AACF board members and staff, charged with defining the role of Executive Director and engaging in a national search.

In June, Val Rose Habrock joined AACF as Director of Governmental Affairs. With a strong background in government affairs and child advocacy, Val was able to hit the ground running in 2022 to help AACF manage the development of our legislative strategy for Arkansas's 2023 legislative session.

I'm excited to officially welcome our new Executive Director Keesa Smith. Keesa took the helm in February 2023, and brought with her a decade of policy experience from the governor's suite to legal aid to leadership in Arkansas' Department of Human Services.

As always, all of us at AACF are thankful for your interest in and support of our work. We are stronger in our advocacy efforts thanks to friends and supporters like you.

Onward together!

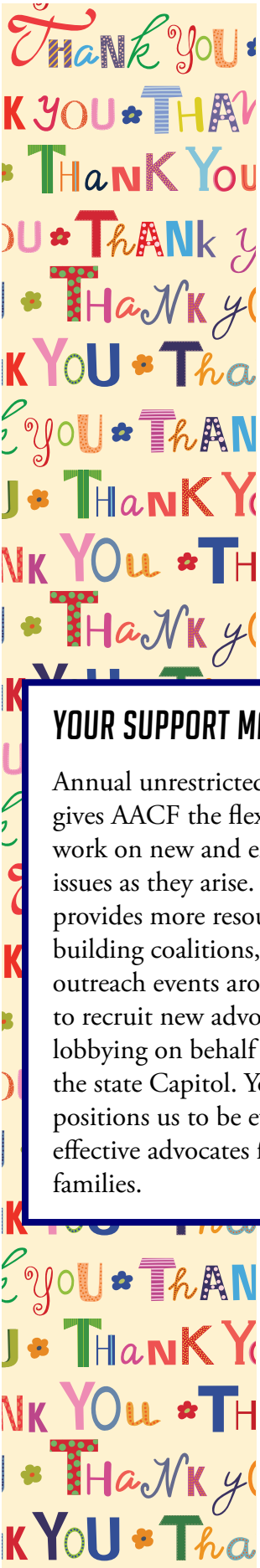
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Davis'.

Ryan Davis, President
AACF Board of Directors

AACF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEESA SMITH

Keesa worked for the Arkansas Department of Human Services from 2013 until 2023 as the Deputy Director of Youth and Families. In that role, she oversaw the divisions responsible for the state's child welfare, juvenile justice and early education programs during a time of significant transformation.

Keesa earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her Juris Doctorate from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law. She is a member of the Pulaski County Bar Association; the Harold Flowers Law Society; the Beta Pi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; the inaugural class of the Arkansas Bar Association Leadership Academy Program; Class XXVI of the Leadership Greater Little Rock program; and she is a 2021 Aspen Institute Ascend Fellow.



LETTER FROM OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Dear AACF Donors and Future Donors,

350,000 kids just said THANK YOU!

Thanks to congressional approval at the end of 2022, kids whose families have the lowest incomes in the ARKids A Medicaid-funded health insurance program will now have a full year of eligibility, rather than losing coverage when their parents' income fluctuates month-to-month. This has been a priority for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and we celebrate this important policy win for Arkansas's kids! This policy change, effective January 1, 2024, gives more than 350,000 Arkansas children more consistent access to health care, especially preventive services that can keep them healthy as they grow up.

This is how YOUR support helps kids in Arkansas. For more than 45 years, AACF has been making sure the needs of kids are a top priority, and we are not stopping until every kid in Arkansas has the resources they need.

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, hosting outreach events around the state to recruit new advocates, and lobbying on behalf of children at the state Capitol. Your support positions us to be even more effective advocates for Arkansas's families.

Your support makes our work possible!

- Your gift helps us advocate for public policies that benefit all kids in Arkansas.
- Your investment is needed to promote state tax and budget policies that support children and working families.
- Your support allows us to hold state leaders accountable for their votes and decisions that affect kids and families.

We continue to call attention to the fact that our state budget does not provide the resources that every child in Arkansas needs. As long as kids go to school hungry, as long as families don't have access to affordable health care, and as long as families remain in poverty, we will advocate for our state policymakers to do better.

Together we can advocate for better public policies to help each of Arkansas's children and families thrive and succeed.

Thank you to the many supporters who invest in our work. Individuals, corporate and foundation donors, and event sponsors provide critical funding to further our efforts on behalf of kids and families. If you would like to make a donation now, visit aradvocates.org/donate or scan the QR code.



We're grateful to fight for Arkansas's children and families with you,

Fran Carter
Development Director

Missy Darwin Kincaid
Northwest Arkansas Development Director

LEAVE A LEGACY

Although most gifts to AACF come in the form of cash, check or credit card, there are other ways to give. Some donors are choosing to invest in Donor Advised Funds for their charitable giving. Stock gifts and Individual Retirement Account (IRA) gifts are two more common options.

Good policy can make an immediate impact on children and families, but the work to enact it can take years. Including AACF in your estate plans, with a bequest or other tool, helps to ensure that our work will continue for many years to come.

Jill and Tom King believe all children in Arkansas should have the resources to live healthy, productive lives. Their commitment to this belief led them to make a planned estate gift of \$150,000 to Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

“We are proud to support Arkansas Advocates, a strategic organization with leaders who are committed to improving the rights, opportunity and well-being of others, especially the most vulnerable. Their track record of providing research and policy solutions for kids and families has led to transformational change improving the lives of our neighbors across the state from health care to education to economic security – but there is much more work to be done.”

“We are so grateful for Jill and Tom’s gift to Arkansas Advocates,” says Missy Darwin Kincaid, Northwest Arkansas Development Director. “Since they arrived in Northwest Arkansas, they have engaged in our community and found ways to serve from the arts to education and now public policy. They know changing policies takes time and commitment, and this gift ensures our efforts will continue as we work for all Arkansans.”

THANK YOU



Jill and Tom King



RACIAL EQUITY

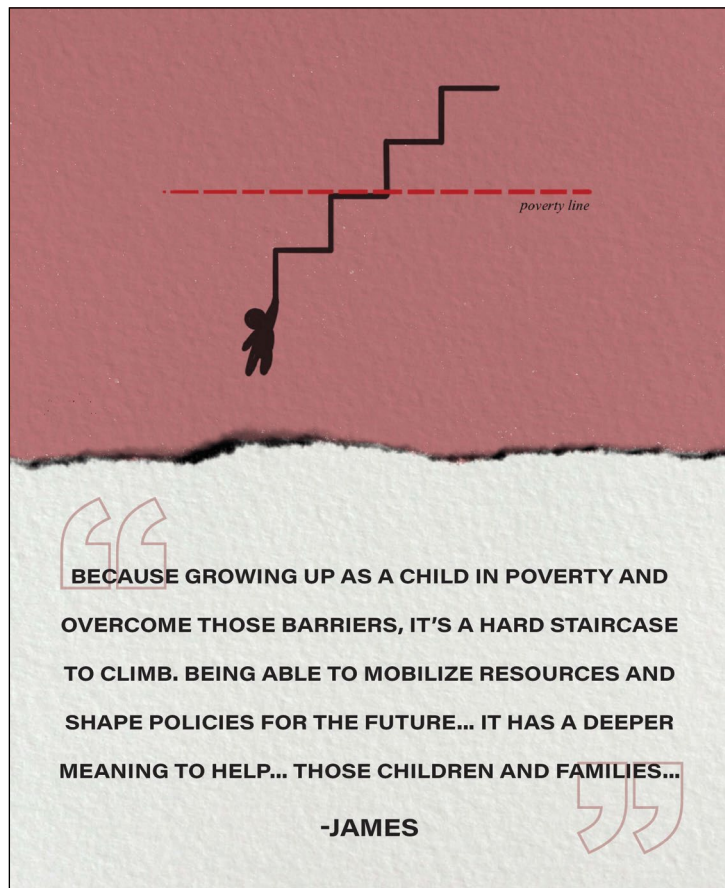
We evaluated the impact the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had on exacerbating racial disparities in 2022. We shared patterns from the 2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book, demonstrating the ways race and ethnicity influence child well-being in Arkansas and how the state and federal government's lack of data disaggregated by race limits opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities because it causes fewer resources to be allocated.

AACF BOARD-APPROVED 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.

We highlighted the Critical State of Black Women's Health through a brief, a report, a series of blogs, and a webinar while providing a list of necessary strategies to improve their outcomes. We also published a report on postpartum care in Arkansas and examined the fact that Arkansas has a 15% higher rate of death in the first year after birth for women when compared to the national rate. Postpartum Care in Arkansas: A Crisis of Coverage explores how Black women are disproportionately dying in the year after giving birth and how extending Medicaid for one-year postpartum could help keep these families whole.

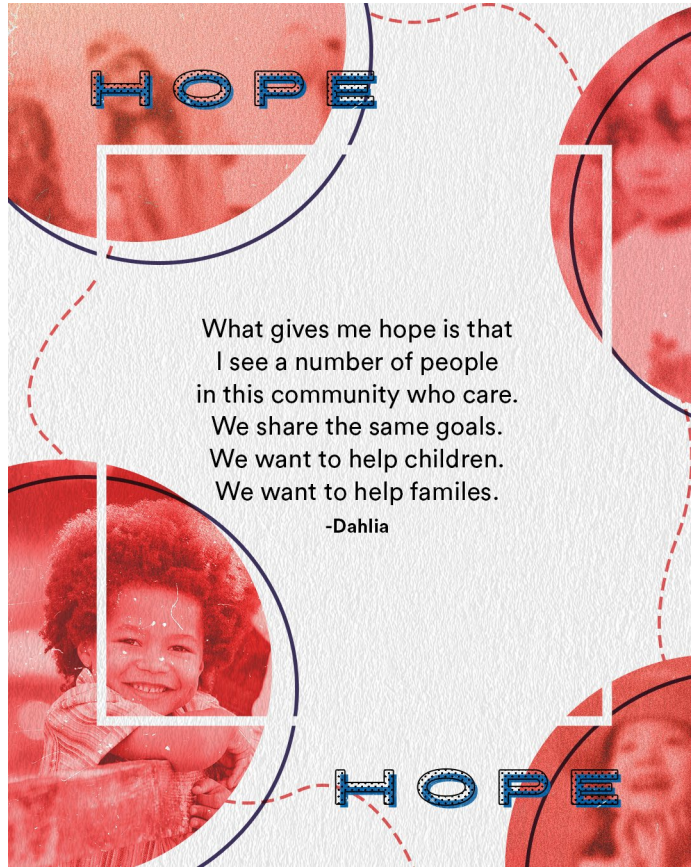
Finally, we looked at how race equity impacts all the issues we advocate for and developed an advocacy guide and legislative agenda that address inequitable barriers that keep Arkansas's BIPOC families from thriving.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How wonderful it was to see our partners and fellow advocates in person again this year! Through both the Arkansas Kids Count Coalition and other outreach opportunities, we talked with some 1,600 participants who attended AACF's 29 outreach events and 35 presentations across the state. We provided advocacy trainings and data overviews, prepared for the upcoming legislative session, shared important data from the Kids Count Data Book, and discussed many other topics. We also traveled Arkansas to meet with partners and advocates about the issues they saw impacting kids in their communities, connecting them with our work, and asking how we can best assist them in their advocacy efforts.

The Kids Count Coalition, led by a steering committee from around Arkansas, continued to find new ways to raise awareness about policy issues impacting children and families and teaching people how to lobby and advocate, including sending monthly emails with advocacy opportunities. The Coalition ended the year with policy summits to prepare people to lobby for children and families during the 94th General Assembly Session.



AACF leads workshops on how to advocate. If you would like to schedule a training for your group or organization, please call 501-371-9678.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF ARKANSANS AT THE BALLOT BOX

Arkansas Advocates celebrated the defeat of Issue 2 this year. Ballot initiatives give Arkansans the power to make decisions on important issues that matter to our communities. We've used them in our state for over 100 years. In 2022, AACF worked with a coalition of grassroots organizations, called Protect AR Rights, to defeat Issue 2, which was an attempt by some politicians to fool voters into giving away their power, so politicians could get what they wanted, instead of what the people wanted. We will continue to work with our partners to defend the rights of Arkansans at the ballot box.



STORYTELLING

In 2022, AACF engaged in its second round of Medicaid story collection for Medicaid: The Lived Experience. The AACF health team traveled to various cities in Arkansas to understand the different perspectives of those impacted by the state's Medicaid program. For a second year, the project also focused on amplifying the voices of historically excluded populations (the Marshallese community; African American/Black communities throughout the central, Delta, and southern areas of the state; and Hispanic/Latino communities), where higher rates of health disparities persist.

AACF produced a documentary capturing the lived experiences of Arkansans throughout the state, in collaboration with Brandon House Cultural and Performing Arts Center's Production Team. The two organizations traveled to Fayetteville, Dermott, Conway, Searcy, De Queen, and Little Rock to speak with Arkansans about the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the Medicaid program. In December, AACF premiered the first installment of *Medicaid: The Lived Experience* at the Brandon House Event Center. Attendees were captivated by stories highlighting the disparities in healthcare due to the intersectional identities of storytellers, and wanted to know how they could help. This documentary served as a stepping stone to highlight our healthcare advocacy areas and to focus our legislative priorities for the 2023 Arkansas Legislative Session.

HEALTH

In 2022, the AACF health team spent much of its time focusing on preparing for the end of the public health emergency. In 2022, we also participated in local, state, and national forums, conferences, and coalitions to monitor policy changes related to the national- and state-declared public health emergency. We developed outreach materials and formed a stakeholder group of health partners in Arkansas to share updates on the public health emergency's status and understand how different groups would be impacted by its end. Fortunately, the public health emergency continued throughout the entirety of 2022, allowing children and families to maintain their life-saving Medicaid benefits.

Another key focus of the AACF health team was to better understand, highlight, and spread awareness of healthcare inequities throughout the state. AACF engaged health partners in conversations about the state of mental and behavioral health services, the Black maternal health crisis and the need for expanded postpartum care, and the importance of healthcare for Arkansas's most vulnerable children and families.

In 2022, AACF also informed the public about changes to the Arkansas Medicaid Expansion Program, now called ARHOME, aimed at improving health outcomes in the state. In collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, AACF hosted a webinar to discuss improvements made to the program to address maternal health, mental illness and substance abuse in rural areas, and young adults at risk of long-term poverty and poor health outcomes. We also created and shared outreach materials about the Affordable Care Act Marketplace open enrollment period.

EDUCATION

In 2022, the Arkansas House and Senate Education Committees underwent their biannual educational adequacy process, which requires that public education in all corners of the state be evaluated to make sure it is both adequate and equitable. The legislature produced their reports at the end of the year, and AACF submitted written testimony during this process. In July, we promoted education advocacy month, hosting an event focused on helping parents understand what decisions are made and where in K-12 education, and another on the challenges facing the early childhood education workforce. Lastly, we published a report highlighting school discipline, including an explanation of the current landscape, how this issue is inherently one of racial inequity, and the need for holistic reform.

We remain focused on issues like funding for the Positive Youth Development Act to support our out-of-school programs, expanding access and affordability for early childhood education and supporting the early childhood workforce, and defending against efforts to expand our K-12 voucher program.

TAX AND BUDGET + ECONOMIC SECURITY

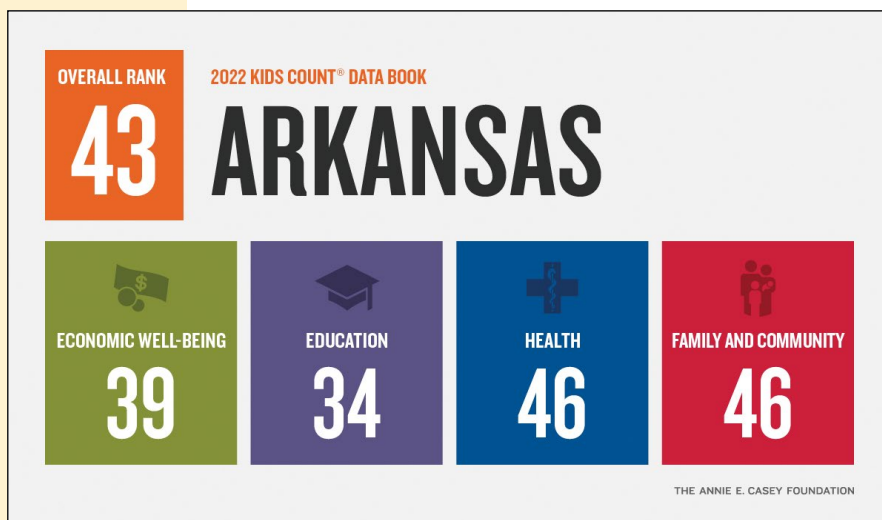
Together with partners, we worked to ensure that needed investments in home- and community-based services were included in budgets passed during the 2022 fiscal session. Unfortunately, the legislature was called into special session again in 2022 to fast-track previously passed income tax cuts that primarily benefit high-income earners.

To counterbalance the narrative and show the need for more public investments in the state budget, after more than a year of collaboration, AACF and partners, together known as the Arkansas Coalition for Strong Families, released a shared agenda of investments needed. The Arkansas Coalition for Strong Families envisions an Arkansas where everyone, no matter their age, background, race, gender, disability, or status, has the opportunity to live meaningful, fulfilling lives in strong, thriving communities. Focus areas of the coalition's agenda include Healthy Kids, Thriving Communities, and a Strong Care Workforce.

FOOD SECURITY

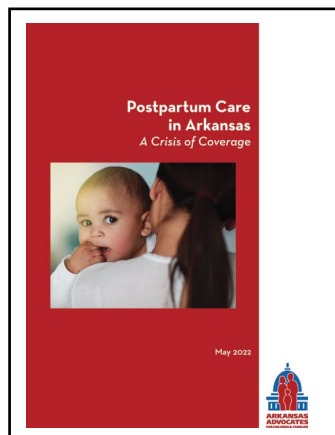
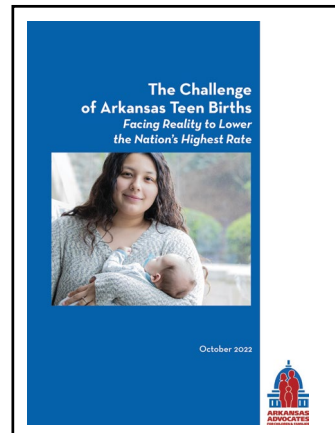
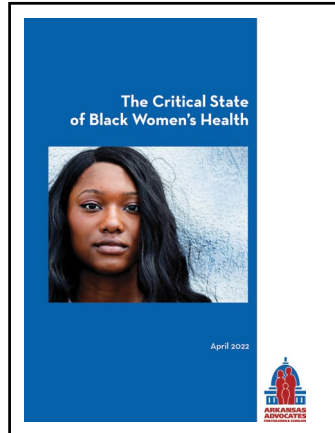
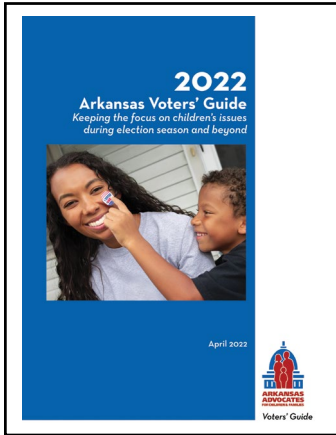
Throughout 2022, we continued to look at food insecurity and the role the pandemic continues to play in making it harder for families to access food benefits. With our partners at the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, we reviewed food security programs in Arkansas and identified challenges to program access both at the state and federal levels and developed recommendations. We urged Congress to extend the waivers for school nutrition programs, update the Child Nutrition Reauthorization, which hasn't been done since 2010, and to ensure our Marshallese families can also receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) benefits. AACF also developed our state legislative agenda in collaboration with partners for the 2023 Arkansas legislative session with a focus on making sure that

benefits like SNAP remain accessible for those families who are eligible to receive them.



COMMUNICATIONS

In 2022, AACF published 52 blog posts, sent 40 press releases, hosted 8 Facebook live videos, and sent 231 emails to our followers and supporters.



2022 Digital Followers

Twitter

6,344

Facebook

10,645


Instagram

1,676

FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS

 facebook.com/aradvocates

 twitter.com/aacf

 [@aradvocates](https://instagram.com/aradvocates)

2022 EVENT PHOTOS

CENTRAL ARKANSAS SOUP SUNDAY



Helen Ferguson and Allie Steliga



2022 Central Arkansas Soup Sunday Golden Ladle winners from The Root Cafe, along with Soup Sunday co-chairs Joshua Price (left) and Brian Kutsch (right)

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS SOUP SUNDAY



AACF Board Secretary Dr. Sheldon Riklon (far right) with his guests

AACF Northwest Arkansas Director Laura Kellams with 2022 NWA Soup Sunday Golden Ladle winner from SecondHand Smoke

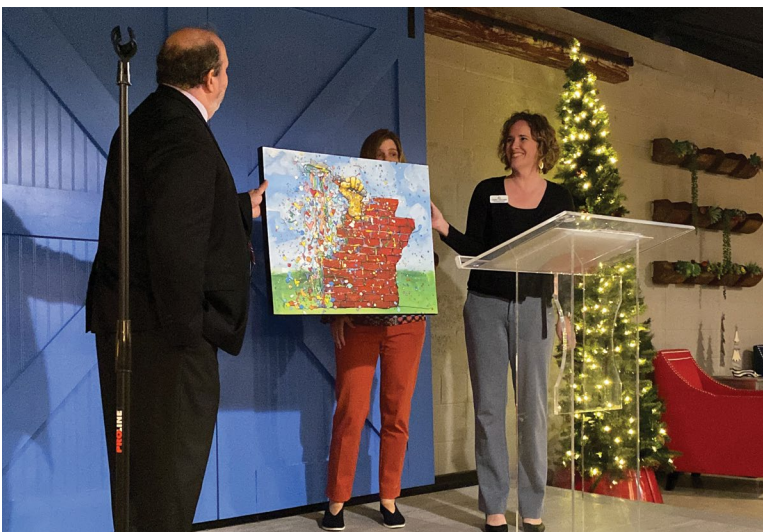


FRIENDS OF CHILDREN ANNUAL LUNCHEON



*2022 Friends of Children Honorees
Senator Joyce Elliott
and Ray Hanley*

RICH HUDDLESTON FAREWELL RECEPTION



*Jennifer Ferguson
and Laura Kellams
present outgoing
Executive Director Rich
Huddleston with a
painting in honor of his
many years of service.*

*Rich Huddleston (right)
with Jim Miles,
one of AACF's founders*



BUILDING A MOVEMENT FOR ARKANSAS'S KIDS: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION IN EL DORADO

Attendees at the Roundtable Discussion received updates on policy issues impacting children across the state and shared the issues that concerned them most in their communities



MEDICAID: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTARY VIEWING

AACF Health Policy Analyst CaSandra Glover presents at the screening of Medicaid: The Lived Experience, a documentary produced by AACF in partnership with the Brandon House Cultural & Performing Arts Center

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S POLICY SUMMIT

AACF Northwest Arkansas Director Laura Kellams helps participants get ready to advocate at the State Capitol on behalf of the state's kids

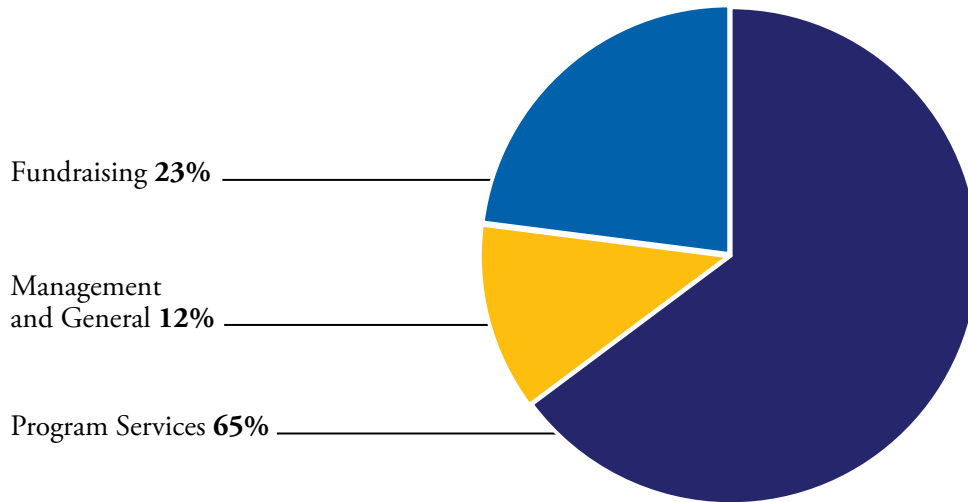


2022 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

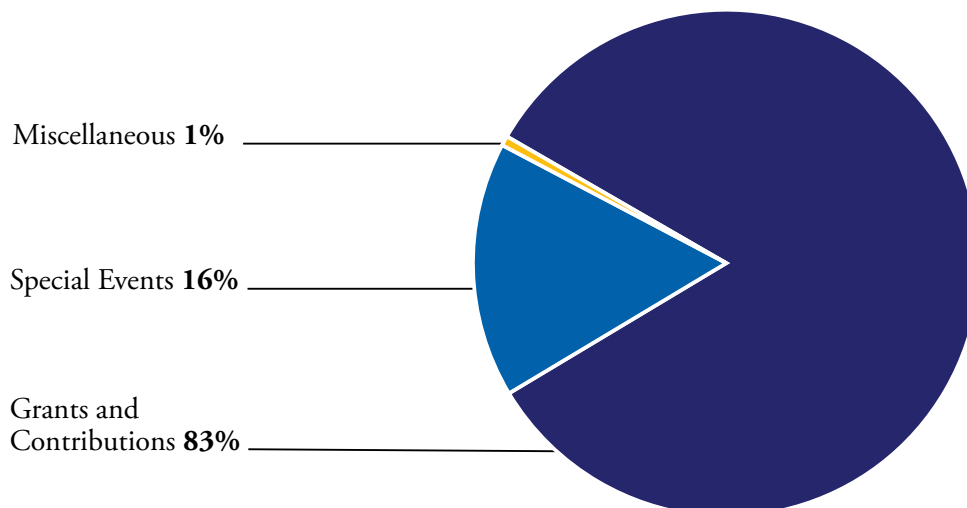
Total Revenue & Support.....	1,782,051
Total Expenses.....	1,984,506
Increase in Net Assets without Donor Restriction.....	(202,455)
Increase in Net Assets with Donor Restriction.....	(100,468)
Increase in Total Net Assets	(302,923)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	2,580,473
Net Assets, End of Year.....	2,277,550

For the Year Ended December 31, 2022
 From audited financials prepared by Landmark PLC

EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT



2022 FUNDERS

\$5,000+ FUNDERS

Alliance for Early Success
American Heart Association
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Arkansas Community Foundation
Center on Budget & Policy Priorities
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
David & Lucile Packard Foundation
Debt Free Justice Campaign
Economic Policy Institute
Excellerate Foundation
Fred Darragh Foundation
HLB Universal Healthcare Trust
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Partnership for America's Children
Second Presbyterian Church
The Walmart Foundation, Inc.
Windgate Foundation
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

\$1,000 TO \$4,999 ORGANIZATIONS

Adventure Subaru
Airways Freight Corp
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Arkansas Children's
Arkansas Electric Cooperative
Corporation
Arkansas Family Dental
Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care
Arkansas Health & Wellness
Arkansas Hospital Association
Arkansas Minority Health Commission
Arvest Bank
Bozie Foundation
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Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon
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Dillard's
Entergy Arkansas
Garver
Hunt Ventures
Kendra Scott LLC
Landmark PLC,
Certified Public Accountants
Law Office of Danyelle Walker, PLLC
Legacy Termite and Pest Control, Inc.
Little Rock Pediatric Clinic
Mathews Management Company
McMath Woods, P.A.
Methodist Foundation for Arkansas
Munro Foundation
Nathan Dalton Whetstone Endowment
for Arkansas Children's Charities/
ARCF
Olds Foundation, Inc.
Ozarks Electric /Ozarks Go
Propak
Pulaski Heights United
Methodist Church
Roberts Family Charitable Fund/ARCF
Roger and Patty Harness Family
Foundation
Schmieding Foundation
Simmons Bank
Springwoods Behavioral Health
UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller
Cancer Institute
Walmart
Washington Regional Medical Center
Willard & Pat Walker Charitable
Foundation
William H. Bowen Family Foundation
Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP

\$1,000+ INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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Hamid Ebrahimifar
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and Mr. Don Evans
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Drs. Eleanor Kennedy and Lee Abel
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Brooke Bumpers and Gordon Low
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Dr. Chad Rodgers and Eric McDaniel
Judy and Jay McDonald
Chelsea Miller
Patsy B. Mooney
Kelly and Dr. Eddie Ochoa

Pam and David Parks
Dr. and Mrs. Don Pederson
Martine and David Pollard
Anna and John Riggs
Lynda and Dr. Sheldon Riklon
Kathy and Bobby Roberts
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Judy and Dr. Bill Schwab
Denton and Cathy Cole Seilhan/ARCF
Jeannie Fetting and John Selig
Sara and Kevin Shalin
Frank Sharp
Nancy and Judge Kim Smith
Candace and David Starling
Wanda Stephens
Dr. and Mrs. Aaron Strong
Jan and Stacey Sturner
Kathleen Trotter
K.C. and Joe Tucker
Toni and Sen. Clarke Tucker
Sue and David Van Bebber
Mary Ellen Vogler
Drs. Becky and Gary Wheeler
Kirk Wilson
Mary and Jim Wohlleb
Jeremiah and Emily Wood
Linda Wray

Thank you to all funders whose generous investment in our work helps us serve children and families in Arkansas.

If you would like to make a donation, please visit our website at aradvocates.org/ donate.

ARCF designation after a name indicates that they donated through the Arkansas Community Foundation.

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ryan D. Davis

VICE PRESIDENT

Xochitl Delgado Solorzano

SECRETARY

Sheldon Riklon, M.D.

TREASURER

Shannon Collier-Tenison, Ph.D.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Gary Wheeler, M.D.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Martie North

Rejena S. Grotjohn, J.D.

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Tamara P. Glover, Ph.D.

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Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman

Chad Rodgers, M.D.

William (Bill) Schwab, Ph.D.

Aaron Strong, M.D.

Stacey Sturner, J.D.

Pastor Dwight Townsend

Danyelle Walker, J.D.



DID YOU KNOW?

AACF was founded in 1977 by 10 concerned Arkansans, and Hillary Rodham Clinton served as the first President of the Board of Directors.

AACF 2022 STAFF

Rich Huddleston,
Executive Director
Jennifer Ferguson,
Deputy Director
Loretta Alexander,
Health Policy Director
Nastassja Campbell,
Intern
Fran Carter,
Development Director
Brooke Edwards,
Communications Director
Maricella Garcia,
Race Equity Director for Advocacy
Olivia Gardner,
Director of Education Policy
CaSandra Glover,
Health Policy Analyst
Val Habrock,
Director of Governmental Affairs
Christine Hartman,
Northwest Arkansas Office
Coordinator

Laura Kellams,
Northwest Arkansas Director
Missy Darwin Kincaid,
Northwest Arkansas Development
Director
Lindsey Lamb,
Little Rock Office Coordinator
Cara Neal,
Administrative and Finance Director
Anna Quesada,
Intern
Chacey Schoepfel,
Intern
Bruno Showers,
Senior Policy Analyst
Nancy Velazquez,
Intern
Rebecca Zimmermann,
Community Engagement Director

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



*Back row, left to right: Chacey Schoepfel, Lindsey Lamb, Loretta Alexander, Missy Darwin Kincaid, CaSandra Glover, Cara Neal, Jennifer Ferguson, Brooke Edwards
Front row, left to right: Olivia Gardner, Fran Carter, Val Habrock, Rich Huddleston, Maricella Garcia, Laura Kellams, Rebecca Zimmermann*



Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

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Learn more at

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