

Director of Governmental Affairs

Val Habrock



Val Rose Habrock joined AACF in June 2022 as Director of Governmental Affairs. Her previous roles include serving as Government Affairs Director for the Council on American Islamic Relations, Oklahoma chapter; and as former Kids Count Director for the Oklahoma Institute

for Child Advocacy. She holds a degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics from The King's College NYC.

In this role, Val serves as AACF's primary lobbyist, representing and advocating for our organization's positions on legislation with members of the General Assembly, Governor's Office, state agency officials, stakeholders, and the Arkansas Congressional Delegation. She also manages the development and execution of AACF's legislative strategy.

Val is an Arkansas transplant from Oklahoma and is enjoying the curvy roads, the view, and all the wild weather Arkansas has to offer.

Be Social



facebook.com/aradvocates



twitter.com/aacf



@aradvocates



Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Union Station
1400 W. Markham St., Suite 306
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 371-9678
www.aradvocates.org

Non-profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2942
Little Rock, AR

Advocacy Matters



IN THIS ISSUE:

A Note from the Board President
Engage and Advocate with AACF
Val Habrock, Governmental Affairs

Coming in 2023 - The 94th Arkansas General Assembly

Public policy is at the heart of our work at Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. The upcoming legislative session is an opportunity for AACF to promote policies that help all kids in Arkansas. Below is our list of legislative priorities. Dig deeper into the topics through recent blog posts and publications at aradvocates.org.

Tax, Budget and Family Economic Security

Promote state tax and budget policies that economically support families and ensure adequate revenue for critical programs serving children and families.

Food Insecurity

Improve access to nutritional, healthy, and affordable foods for all children and fight hunger.

Watch our latest video
A Shared Vision for Arkansas
<https://www.youtube.com/aradvocates>

Arkansas's Kids Count!

Every child needs food, health care, safe and stable housing, and access to education. But the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2022 KIDS COUNT® Data Book shows Arkansas is a harder place to be a child than almost anywhere else in the country. Arkansas's child well-being outcomes are worse than the national average in 11 out of 16 indicators. And while Arkansas's outcomes have generally improved over time, we are losing ground in preschool enrollment; our low birth weight babies rate has worsened far faster than the national rate; and we're seeing a concerning increase in child and teen deaths and teen obesity rates.

Health Care

Improve child and family health by expanding coverage and access to services through Medicaid, ARKids First, Medicaid Expansion and the Affordable Care Act.

Education

Promote education equity and close achievement gaps for low-income students, BIPOC students, English language learners and students with disabilities through research proven strategies.

Juvenile Justice

Improve the well-being and long-term outcomes for vulnerable children in the state child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Equity and Democracy

Promote equity by protecting democracy and civil rights for all Arkansans.

"There are state-level policy solutions to every troubling piece of data," said Rich Huddleston, executive director of AACF, Arkansas's representative in the KIDS COUNT network. "Lack of political will and lack of targeted investments in our children keep Arkansas near the bottom of the states."

Nearly 100 advocates from across Northwest Arkansas gathered in August to "Stand Up for Kids" and learn about the most current research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Guests lent their voices on behalf of kids to acknowledge that being 43rd in the country is NOT acceptable! For more information about the Kids Count Data, visit www.aradvocates.org/kids-count/

AACF Issue Areas

AACF focuses on key issue areas to help improve child well-being in Arkansas.

- Child welfare
- Economic security
- Early childhood and K-12 education
- Health care
- Hunger
- Immigrant children and families
- Juvenile justice
- Racial equity
- Tax and budget

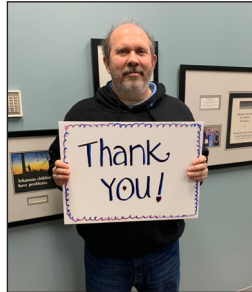
AACF 2022 Board of Directors

- Ryan D. Davis, President
- Xochitl Delgado Solorzano, Vice President
- Sheldon Riklon, MD, Secretary
- Shannon Collier-Tenison, PhD, Treasurer
- Gary Wheeler, MD, Immediate Past President
- Nikki Edge, PhD
- Hershey Garner, JD, MD
- Tamara P. Glover, PhD
- Rejena S. Grotjohn, JD
- Susan Sullivan Miller, MD
- Rev. Natasha Murray-Norman
- Martie North
- Chad Rodgers, MD
- William Schwab, PhD
- Aaron Strong, MD
- Stacey Sturner, JD
- Pastor Dwight Townsend
- Danyelle Walker, JD

A Note from Ryan Davis

President AACF Board of Directors

We are grateful to Rich Huddleston for his 27 years of service to AACF, and for his generous spirit in leading our work, especially during this transition period. Thank you, Rich Huddleston!



I'd like to highlight just a few of the significant policy wins for children that have come about during Rich's tenure:

- The expansion of quality Pre-K
- Three increases in the state minimum wage
- Making the tax system fairer for low-income families
- The expansion of health care coverage for adults with low incomes
- Access to children's health care coverage for Marshallese and other immigrant children
- Juvenile justice reform
- School discipline reform

We are working with Monday Morning Consultants in the search for a new Executive Director. We look forward to finding the right person to guide AACF into the future.

Yours in Advocacy,
Ryan Davis

If you would like to host a speaker from AACF, please contact us at connect@aradvocates.org.

AACF Engages

2022 Annual Luncheon

Our Friends of Children Annual Luncheon was a success!

We are always humbled by the show of support for our work. And we admire our honorees, Senator Joyce Elliott and Ray Hanley, for their important work on behalf of our state's children. We are thankful for all they've done to ensure that kids in Arkansas have the opportunities they need to be healthy and successful.



Go to www.youtube.com/aradvocates to watch the honoree videos.

SAVE THE DATE

- November 29, 2022 Giving Tuesday
- November 30, 2022 Children's Policy Summit NWA
- December 13, 2022 Children's Policy Summit LR
- February 5, 2023 Northwest Arkansas Soup Sunday
- February 14, 2023 Kids Count Day at the Capitol
- March 5, 2023 Central Arkansas Soup Sunday

Register online for free events and get Soup Sunday tickets at www.aradvocates.org/events.

We are now accepting Soup Sunday sponsorships!



Donate to Support Advocacy

Use this QR code to go to AACF's donation page

Visit www.aradvocates.org/donate

Text ADVOCATE to 243725

Call Fran Carter 501-454-5014 or Missy Kincaid 479-466-0771

Giving Tuesday is November 29, 2022!

AACF in Carroll County

AACF and the Carroll County Community Foundation hosted a Kids Roundtable Discussion in August to talk about how we can help all kids in AR do better. The group included educators, social workers, health care professionals, community leaders, parents and family members who are committed to being sure all kids in their region have the resources to survive and thrive.



How to Advocate

- Sign up for our advocacy legislative alerts: www.aradvocates.org/get-alerts
- Take and share AACF Action Alerts and connect with your legislators
- Attend AACF Kids Count Day at the Capitol
- Testify at General Assembly committee meetings on issues you care about