




OUR MISSION

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. We:

-  Serve as a voice for children at the Arkansas State Capitol and in Washington, D.C.
-  Gather and analyze data to support public policy that serves all children and families.
-  Organize coalitions of diverse groups to drive change.

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.

To view a list of 2025 donors, visit our website at aradvocates.org/donors.



Learn more at www.aradvocates.org

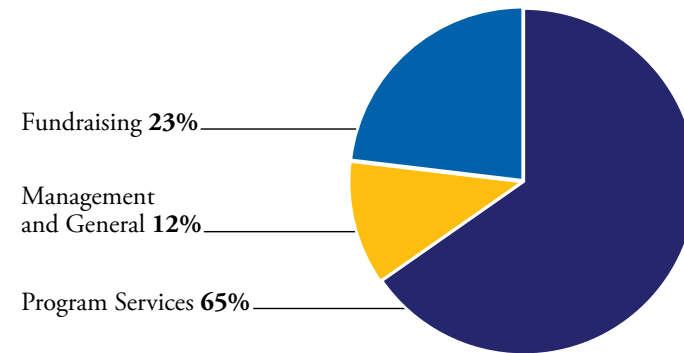
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2025 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

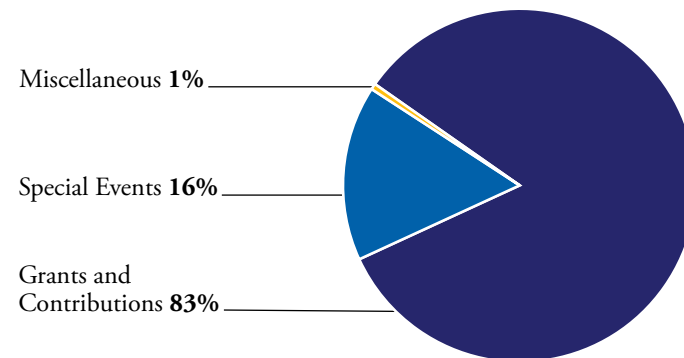
Total Revenue & Support.....	\$2,864,953
Total Expenses.....	\$2,574,677
Increase in Net Assets without Donor Restriction	\$290,276
Increase in Net Assets with Donor Restriction.....	\$328,883
Increase in Total Net Assets	\$619,159
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$2,795,942
Net Assets, End of Year.....	\$3,415,101

For the Year Ended December 31, 2025
From audited financials prepared by Landmark PLC

EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT



SOUP SUNDAY



chairs:

Gene Lu, Central Arkansas Co-Chair; Kevin Shalin, Central Arkansas Co-Chair
Kayln Chance, Northwest Arkansas Honorary Chair; Channing Barker, Northwest Arkansas Event Chair; Joseph Nguyen, Northwest Arkansas Restaurant Chair

winners:

Central Arkansas Dave Williams Golden Ladle Award: SO Restaurant-Bar
Northwest Arkansas Golden Ladle: Early Bird Catering



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



2025 AACF HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, we inspired Arkansans to learn about and engage in advocacy on issues that matter to them. From film screenings and federal town halls to post-legislative session summits, we held 45 policy and advocacy events around the state and online, with more than 1,600 attendees. We also:

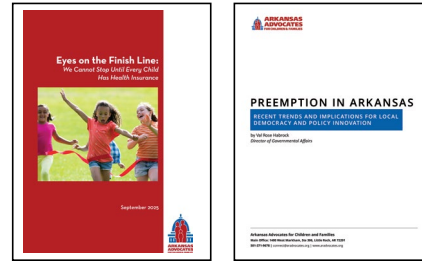
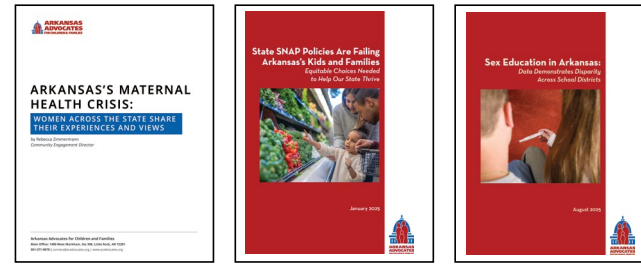
- Presented 36 Champion for Children Awards to individuals, organizations and legislators
- Made 42 presentations to partners and community groups
- Hosted events in each congressional district and traveled to multiple towns across the state



Attendees at the Kids Count Coalition Children's Policy Summit in Hot Springs learned about recent legislation and how to advocate throughout the year.

STORYTELLING

Building on our storytelling work from 2024, AACF launched a new Medicaid storytelling campaign focused on identifying community leaders in 2025. We hosted four focus groups where we spoke with Arkansans about their Medicaid experiences, with four additional story collections scheduled for early 2026. We focused on creating a collaborative space for Arkansans to share their stories. Too often, the voices of those most impacted are not included in the conversation about coverage and care. Recognizing this, AACF maintained close contact with storytellers and invited them to participate in story collection, town halls, legislative testimony, blog posts, and in contact with the media.



RESEARCH

A key part of our work is researching issues facing Arkansas's children and families and recommending evidence-based policy solutions. Here are a few things we learned and reported on in 2025:

- The lack of OBGYNs in certain areas of the state and the corresponding travel distance to receive medical care is a major concern: 45.3% of Arkansas counties are maternity care deserts.
- Arkansas has the nation's highest hunger rate, but participation in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is relatively low, in part due to state-level barriers to enrollment.
- Most school districts in Arkansas offer some sexual education curriculum. But the curricula are far from standardized, with a limited number including information about contraceptives, abuse prevention, and sexual orientation.
- After reaching a historic low of 4.1% in 2016, the uninsured rate for children climbed to 6.7% in 2023. Arkansas now ranks 42nd in the nation for children's health coverage.
- Over the past 10 years, Arkansas lawmakers have followed the national wave of state-level "preemption" politics by introducing multiple bills that limit city and local authority.



Elementary school student Olivia Stallings spoke in the Capitol rotunda as part of the Arkansas Kids Count Coalition's 2025 Kids Count Day at the Capitol, which drew more than 150 attendees.

ADVOCACY

To complement the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Act of 2025, AACF proposed an innovative approach to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage in Arkansas from 60 days to 12 months. This bill advanced through the House but unfortunately failed in the Senate. During the 2025 Regular Session, AACF also fought against several anti-democracy bills and led the effort to establish the 2030 Complete Count Committee, which will help the state prepare for the next decennial census. Strong census participation is critical to securing federal funding for programs that support children and families.

Outside of the legislative session, AACF highlighted state-level policies that result in low Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation in Arkansas (despite having the highest rate of food insecurity nationwide) and offered recommendations to boost SNAP enrollment. We also conducted research that identified a wide disparity in how sexual health education is delivered in public schools and worked with partners to find ways to advance age-appropriate, medically accurate sexual health education.

AACF focused heavily on federal advocacy in 2025, fighting against the harmful One Big Beautiful Bill Act and, after its passage, educating communities about how to mitigate its effects at the state level.

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN LUNCHEON

At our 2025 Friends of Children Annual Luncheon, we honored Eric Gilmore and Dr. Sheldon Riklon for their work improving the lives of Arkansas's children. With more than 300 attendees, we raised almost \$41,000 for AACF.



2025 Friends of Children honorees Dr. Sheldon Riklon (left) and Eric Gilmore (right) with AACF Executive Director Keesa Smith-Brantley



AACF staff at the Annual Luncheon

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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.