



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

**Washington Association for Children & Families**

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[www.wachildrenandfamilies.org](http://www.wachildrenandfamilies.org)



## LETTER FROM JILL MAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I started in my role three years ago committed to making a difference for children and families in Washington State. I don't think I knew what I was in for, but this has been one of the most challenging, and most rewarding, jobs of my career. I was tasked with supporting agencies in their mission to serve children, youth, and families, knowing that we work in a flawed system with many barriers to overcome. I was full of optimism despite knowing there had been many years of challenge.

It hasn't been smooth sailing, but I am proud of what we have done to improve the lives of families and the partnerships we have created in order to do this work. It is easy to see all the things still left to be done, but it is important that we not let those overshadow all we have accomplished. While there is still work to do, we have accomplished SO MUCH.

Last year was a test for all of us, especially for the children, youth, and families we serve. We were tested in ways we would have never imagined, but through it all our members stuck together. Our weekly COVID calls were a space for agencies to come together, share challenges, and hear from their colleagues. Most importantly we were all able to support one another. I was awestruck by our members' tenacity and commitment to children.

We also experienced racial unrest across the country. Our member meetings became a place to talk about the racial inequities facing our children, families, and staff and the impact that was having on families. In response the WACF membership adopted an equity commitment and divisions began work on racial justice issues related to the services they provide.

I am dedicated to our members because I know through your agencies, our children, youth, and families are well served. I am truly grateful to do this work on your behalf and appreciate the trust I have been given to speak for you and advocate so that we have a healthy and robust provider community.

We are Stronger Together!

*Jill May, Executive Director*

## 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

- **Jeff Clare**, Olive Crest - President
- **Mark Fullington**, Community & Family Services Foundation - Western Washington Vice President
- **Amy Woodward**, Cedar Creek Home - Eastern Washington Vice President
- **Carla Arnold**, Youthnet - Secretary
- **Ray Deck III**, Skookum Kids - Treasurer
- **Charlotte Booth**, Institute for Family Development - FPSS Division Chair
- **Cindy Steele**, Catholic Community Services of Western WA - Child Placing Agencies Division Chair
- **Kris Sanborn**, Y Social Impact Center - Intensive Services Division Chair
- **Julie Brown**, Y Social Impact Center - Independent Living Division Chair
- **Brian Carroll**, Secret Harbor - Immediate Past President

### STAFF

- **Jill May**, Executive Director
- **Amy Keltner**, Foster America Fellow
- **Linda Conchi**, Program Coordinator

## ABOUT WACF

The Washington Association for Children & Families (WACF) is a statewide association for people and organizations with a shared goal to strengthen children, youth, and families in Washington State and champion their cause.

Our mission is to engage a diverse and inclusive network of member agencies in collaboration, communication, improved service delivery, and mutual support among organizations. WACF works on behalf of its agencies to support systemic improvement through administrative and legislative advocacy so that organizations can operate efficiently, inclusively, and at the highest quality, to be able to provide critical services for children, youth, and families.

Together, WACF promotes safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. WACF believes that children should be in their families, communities, and neighborhoods, maintaining cultural, tribal, and natural support wherever and whenever possible. WACF achieves its mission through four strategies: member voice, policy and advocacy, practice improvement, and education and awareness.



## OUR EQUITY COMMITMENT

*Members shall commit to removing practices and policies that lead to poor outcomes for people of color in the child welfare system. WACF will ensure all policy, advocacy and practice improvement changes have a focus on removing racism. We value providing best practice that promotes improved outcomes for children and youth regardless of their economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, or age. - WACF Bylaws*

### WACF HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2020-21

- Welcomed 10 new members
- Launched the WACF Independent Living Services division
- Realized \$1.6 million in new revenue for agencies, for a total of \$37 million since 2019
- Passage of three critical bills for children and families
- Created a 501(c)(3), the WACF Institute for Practice Improvement
- Added first new full time staff role since 2018
- Debuted the Equity Resources Hub and racial justice projects in divisions
- Acted as a COVID-19 hub for members in connection with the Governor's office and DYCF
- Launched monthly member newsletters and updated member portal

## MEMBER VOICE

WACF is a growing organization, bringing private child welfare agencies together united with one voice. Since 2018, we have steadily increased our impact and role in the state of Washington as the voice for private agencies. WACF's members are represented in many stakeholder groups that help keep us informed of the current landscape of child welfare and ensure that the provider voice is heard. These groups include:

- Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition (CWAC)
- Supreme Court Commission on Foster Care
- Child Welfare Rapid Covid Response
- Innovative Dependency Court Collaborative (IDCC)
- Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy (WACHYA)
- Kinship Caregiver Oversight Committee
- Keeping Families Together
- National Organization of State Associations for Children
- Family Connection Program Advisory Committee
- DCYF LGBTQ Advisory Committee
- Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership and workgroups representing WACF members



### *Private agencies serve a critical role in Washington*

Private agencies represent one in three foster parents in Washington State, and 100% of all service providers in the delivery of family preservation and prevention, therapeutic foster homes, staffed residential group homes and independent living services.

WACF represents the majority of private agencies providing these services, from 90% of Child Placing Agencies to 75% of private agencies providing other services.

*“WACF provides strong advocacy, an avenue for clear and concise communication with DCYF leadership, and a unified voice for providers’ needs. This is especially important for smaller agencies.”*

*- Samantha Garcia,  
Pierce County Alliance*

## POLICY & ADVOCACY

WACF engages the Governor's office, legislature, DCYF, and other stakeholders to ensure policies are in the best interest of children, youth, and families and to ensure those programs are sufficiently funded in order to carry out quality services.

WACF keeps members regularly informed with weekly updates while the Washington legislature is in session, and with the support of a full-time contract lobbyist maintains critical partnerships in the executive and legislative branches and with advocacy partners. WACF also engages with DCYF regularly to make certain member voices are heard and considered as new programs or practice changes are being developed.



Since 2018, WACF has successfully advocated for 37 million dollars in revenue to enable our members to provide critical services to children and families across Washington. During the 2021 legislative session we reviewed and/or commented on 123 proposed pieces of legislation concerning the health, safety, and wellbeing of children and families. Our accomplishments in 2020-21 included:

- Rate Increases in 2021: WACF was able to successfully advocate for a total of 1.6 million dollars in new revenue. The increase provided increased rates for In-home travel time and child placing agencies.
- WACF successfully advocated to remove language that was harmful to children and youth in group care in two different bills.
- WACF actively supported several bills that highlight WACF's values regarding the importance of children remaining with families whenever possible.
  - WACF supported the Independent Living Proviso which enables DCYF to redesign how IL services are provided and increase access to youth.
  - SB 5151 - Created a child-specific license to make it easier for kinship caregivers to be licensed. This bill recognizes the importance of CPAs by including a CPA in the policy creation.
  - HB 1194 - Requires that the first visit after a child is placed outside the home of a parent, guardian, or legal custodian must take place within 72 hours of placement.
  - HB 1227 - Requires hospitals, law enforcement, and courts to find that the removal of a child is necessary to prevent imminent physical harm due to child abuse or neglect. It also requires DCYF to make continuing efforts to place children with relatives. The bill goes into effect in July, 2023.

*"Many of us rely heavily on WACF for their expertise, advocacy, and direction around child welfare services. WACF is the go-to place to get a sense of what's happening with providers of in-home and out-of-home services. This has been especially crucial throughout the pandemic."*

*- Laurie Lippold, Partners for our Children*

## PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

WACF members are united in their focus on achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. Members work together to improve practice and innovate in division meetings and through WACF's Institute for Practice Improvement, which was created in 2020.

Accomplishments include:

- Through private funding, WACF began work in 2018 with a group of 16 member CPAs to develop the first-of-its-kind matching tool to connect prospective foster parents with CPAs through a website, [WA Fosters](#). This year we produced an 8-session webinar series, monthly blogs, and social media along with a much-needed video that explains what a child placing agency is and how the services of CPAs differ from state services.
- WACF provided several communities of practice to elevate our field, share best practices, and develop solutions to benefit our agencies and the children and families they serve. These include the WACF Recruiting forum, the CPA Data Quality workgroup to increase the quality and use of data, and Racial Equity workgroup focused on recruiting foster parents of color. Additionally, WACF divisions worked on creative solutions in response to the pandemic. The FPSS division developed approaches to provide in-home services using telehealth and the IL division disseminated innovative approaches to youth outreach.
- WACF is partnering with DCYF to collaborate on practice improvement in areas such as exceptional placements, foster care placement continuum, and kinship licensing.

*"It's powerful when WACF members come together because we're all looking for ways to increase our impact with kids and families. I always come away with something valuable. WACF helps make us better!"*  
- Kris Sanborn, Y Social Impact Center

## WACF COVID-19 RESPONSE

In 2020 WACF acted as a COVID-19 hub for our members, disseminating critical operational and funding information from DCYF and elevating provider questions to state decision-makers for clarification. WACF advocated for guidance and practices that would provide safe services for our staff, children, and families. We ensured providers had the resources, support, and guidance from DCYF and other stakeholders to adapt services, prioritize safety, and direct relief funding including:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to WACF members and small cash grants to many of our in-home service agencies.
- Telehealth services to offer safer access to services for children and families and enable continuity of care during the pandemic.
- Resources to parents, caregivers, and youth to conduct family time virtually, such as laptops, internet connectivity, and other much-needed supplies.
- Cash assistance to youth, parents, and foster families.

*"During the pandemic WACF ensured that all of us as members had access to information, which was imperative to efficiently serving children and families. As a single provider we were less effective. There is power in numbers. WACF ensures our voice is heard."*

- Molly Phillips, Family Counseling Northwest

## EDUCATION & AWARENESS

WACF is committed to keeping our members informed about local, state, and national issues as well as opportunities, developments in the field, and innovative solutions to achieve better outcomes for children and families. We recognize that one of our most valuable resources is that of our members' own insights and experiences. We promote knowledge sharing in the member community along with other state and national resources to develop our collective capacity and knowledge.

- Our monthly state-wide division meetings provide opportunities for members to network and learn from one another, share recent insights from practice groups and research and data analysis, and hear from subject matter experts.
- WACF keeps members abreast of Washington and national news, opportunities, and resources through monthly newsletters, emails, social media, and weekly updates during the legislative session.
- WACF launched a new Equity Resources Hub for members to share training, materials, research, and consulting partners that advance racial equity and LGBTQ+ equity.
- In 2020 WACF updated our brand with a new logo, tagline, and website to better communicate our mission and collective voice to lawmakers and stakeholders. The updated website also provides easier access to the member-only portal with information about collaboration and member resources.



*“Being part of WACF has provided such a huge benefit to Amara as an organization and to me personally as a leader. I have learned alongside so many of the WACF leaders. I also found support during a global pandemic when it has felt like there are no easy decisions to make. I am thankful for the advocacy that WACF can accomplish.”*

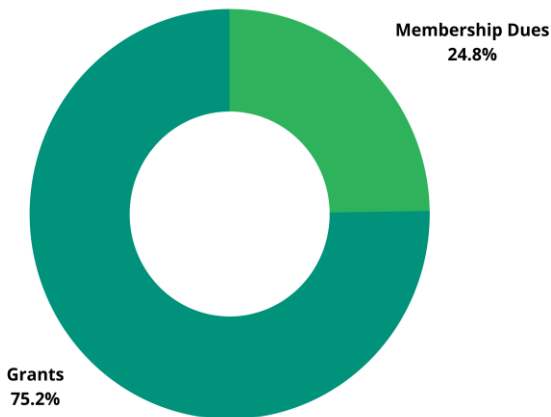
*- Nicole Mazen, Amara*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

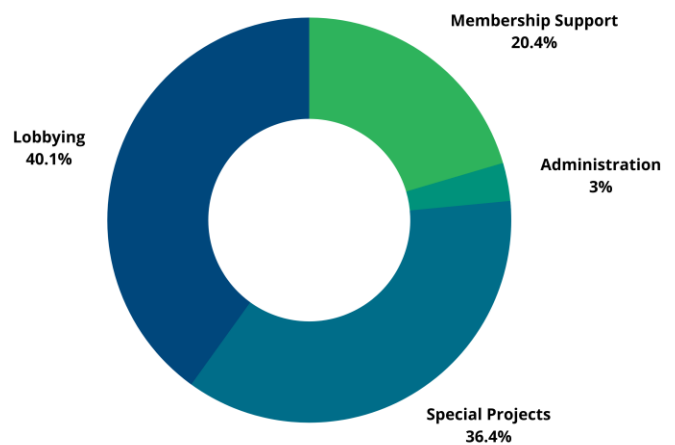
WACF is funded by our members and local philanthropy. In particular, we especially want to thank The Ballmer Group and the Giddens Foundation for their continued support. Both of these funders believe in the power and impact of a unified provider community and provided the resources to create the current model of WACF. WACF is in the process of creating a funding model that diversifies our funding streams and also responds to financial challenges created by COVID. We have been prudent with our spending, underspending our budget each of the last three years, and added a 501(c)(3) to expand our funding opportunities and continue to increase our member value.



### REVENUE



### EXPENSES



*“As a CPA and group care agency, WACF has been our strongest ally and advocate. WACF gives a voice to private agencies to support the families and kids we serve.”*

*- Cori Peck, Secret Harbor*

Member-only discounts are available for professional services from COA and KaleidaCare:

- 25% off the accreditation fee with the Council on Accreditation
- 10% off implementation fees for any newly added programs, for both new and existing customers



## 2020-21 MEMBERS

WACF consists of over 50 member agencies across Washington State. Our members provide in-home prevention services for families at risk of entering foster care, community-based foster care, therapeutic foster care, staffed residential group homes and independent living services.

- A Way Home Washington
- A+K Ingenuity
- Alpine Counseling Services
- Amara
- ANSWERS Counseling
- Antioch Adoptions
- Apple Brooke LLC
- BreakThrough
- Bridge Receiving Center
- Casey Family Programs
- Catholic Charities Serving Central WA
- Catholic Community Services of W. WA
- Cedar Creek Home
- Children's Home Society of Washington
- Community & Family Services Foundation
- Community Youth Services
- Comprehensive Life Resources
- Cornerstone Cottage
- Encompass NW
- Excelsior Wellness Center
- Family Counseling Northwest
- Foster First
- Friends of Youth
- Grassroots Therapy Group
- Hand in Hand
- Institute for Family Development
- Kid Sense LLC
- Kindering
- Lorene's Place II
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- Morning Star Boys' Ranch
- Mullen-Polk Foundation
- Northwest Children's Home, Inc.
- Olive Crest
- Parent and Child Interaction (PCI)
- Partners for our Children
- Pierce County Alliance
- Pioneer Human Services
- PNW Helping Hands inc.
- Ryther
- Secret Harbor
- Service Alternatives
- Skookum Kids
- The Mockingbird Society
- The Patrick Group
- The Source of Spokane
- Webb & Associates, LLC
- Working Choices, Inc.
- Y Social Impact Center
- Youthnet
- YWCA Clark County

### We are Stronger Together!

Refer an agency and receive 10% off your FY 2023 member dues.  
Contact [jillmay@wachildrenandfamilies.org](mailto:jillmay@wachildrenandfamilies.org) for more information.