

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES



**ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022**



LETTER FROM JILL MAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for the confidence you have in me to work on your behalf as Washington continues to reform and change the culture of the child welfare system. Our continued collaboration and strength as one voice give us the leverage to help improve the lives of children, youth and families.

This past year we have seen DCYF make a lot of changes and they are planning the implementation of many other projects. This brings the need for our members to be united and coordinated. I recognize that the change has brought fatigue, a lack of trust and uncertainty for many of our members. WACF is committed to sharing information as quickly as we receive it and are at the table to advocate when conversations of change are occurring. I am keenly aware that without the sustainability of our agencies those outcomes may be at risk.

In the year to come we will continue to focus on improving the services families receive, ensuring that we are focused on removing bias, supporting families in their communities, and striving to provide best practice, so that we achieve the best possible outcomes for all families.

Thank you for your expertise and support. We look forward to achieving great things in the year to come.

We are Stronger Together

Jill May, Executive Director



2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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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 supports wherever and whenever possible. WACF achieves its mission through four strategies: Member Voice, Policy & Advocacy, Practice Improvement, and Professional Development.



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 HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2021-22

- Welcomed 4 new members
- Successfully advocated for an increase of \$8 million for the combined in-home rates, a 40% increase
- Increased intensive service rates by nearly \$18 million
- Kicked off free training for our members, with over 200 agency staff members attending
- Approved through National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP)



MEMBER VOICE

WACF staff are leaders in our industry and serve on various committees and workgroups, acting as a voice and representing our member agencies.

- Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition (CWAC)
- Supreme Court Commission on Foster Care
- Family Well-being Community Collaborative
- 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
- Extended Foster Community Workgroup
- Regular calls with legislators and Governor's Office



STRONGER TOGETHER

DCYF GROUPS

- BRS Statewide meeting
- Caregiver support (placement continuum) workgroup
- Statewide implementation of the Network Administrator
- IL re-design
- Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership
- Monthly meetings with program managers
- CPA/Licensing quarterly meeting
- DCYF Foster Parent Recruitment Meeting
- Ad hoc meetings impacting any of our divisions

“Our advocacy work with WACF has been a true partnership, and their support during the IL Redesign has been invaluable. WACF’s work is clearly driven by improving the lives of young people in care as well as the programs and people that support them.”

- Sara Rylaarsdam, Youthnet



POLICY & ADVOCACY

Since 2018, WACF has successfully advocated for almost 65 million dollars in revenue to enable our members to provide critical services to children and families across Washington. During the 2022 legislative session we reviewed and/or commented on over 100 pieces of legislation concerning the health, safety, and well-being of children and families.



OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDED

LEGISLATIVE RATE INCREASES

- \$8,440,000 annually for combined in-home services
- \$13,375,000 for BRS Facility Rates to stabilize the work force and attract qualified staff
- \$4,500,000 for BRS Treatment Foster Care Rates to increase the monthly rate paid and support to BRS foster families

ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

- Foster Care Continuum project
- Independent Living RFP and re-design
- Implementation of the BRS rate increases
- Ongoing use of telehealth for in-home services and the results of the in-home services rate study

“I remember coming into this job four years ago and what the rates were then and what they are now. The rates are significantly higher now!”

- Paul Lwali, Friends of Youth

PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

WACF members are united in their focus on achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. Through division meetings and WACF's Institute for Practice Improvement, members work together to improve practice and share innovative ideas.

Accomplishments include:

- WACF provided several communities of practice:
 - A WACF foster family recruitment forum
 - CPA Data Quality workgroup, designed to increase use of data
 - A Racial Equity workgroup focused on recruiting foster parents of color
- Creative solutions in response to the pandemic:
 - In-home service providers developed approaches to provide in-home services using telehealth
 - IL providers shared innovative approaches for youth outreach
- WACF also partnered with DCYF to collaborate on practice improvement in areas such as exceptional placements, foster care placement continuum, re-design of IL services and kinship licensing.

“For anyone who is thinking about starting Diversity in Recruiting work, or who is already well on this journey, recognize that this isn’t about sitting in a two-hour meeting. This is about every interaction we have with every staff member, every youth, every family.”

*- Amanda Phinney,
Community Youth Services*

IL COVID RELIEF FUNDS

In the Fall of 2021, DCYF allocated \$1 million in COVID relief funds for youth, and \$1 million to build agency capacity.

COVID Relief Funds helped meet immediate needs and avert crises that could potentially change life trajectories. Young people over 18 had the highest need for financial support due to their independence, but with higher staff capacity ILS providers were able to better reach and support young people.

CPA DIVERSITY IN RECRUITING WORKGROUP

The CPA Diversity in Recruiting workgroup shared their learning from a year-long project on addressing barriers to recruiting families of color and steps agencies can take to build trust with communities of color. The goal was to increase the number of foster parents of color. Lesson learned:

- How can private agencies first be a trustworthy partner for BIPOC communities?
- Acknowledgement of the existence of mistrust
- Private agencies needed to start with our own organizational culture of equity and creating organizations that represent the communities we serve.

Private agencies will continue to review policies and procedures to ensure current and future foster families are racially and culturally competent and increase the number of foster families of color.

WACF CPAs WORK TOWARD FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Community-based foster care placing agencies (CPAs) certify and support a third of caregivers and serve one in five children placed in foster care in Washington. Two-thirds of children who exited a CPA foster home achieved permanency.

WACF CPAs IN 2021

1,980+
Children

1,510+
Caregivers

540+
Children reunified
with parents or kin

BUILDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARENTS & FOSTER PARENTS

For the past two years, 16 WACF member agencies have been working together to report on their efforts to connect caregivers and parents. This is believed to be the largest data collection on this topic in WA state! During 2021, agencies shared the efforts of over 400 foster parents working to build connections with the families of the children in their care. Over that period, half of foster families connected successfully with parents, and almost three-quarters of those were also able to connect with other relatives. When connections were made, 58% of those connections were face-to-face.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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. 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 2022 WACF was approved through National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP).

WACF TRAININGS

In FY 22 WACF offered its members four free trainings, allowing agency staff to earn two or more continued education hours each training at no cost. Trainings offered were:

- Trauma Basics for Providers
- An Overview of Motivational Interviewing
- Mind Meets Body - Biopsychosocial Approach to Child & Adolescent Behavior
- Building Family Connections



“WACF has provided content rich trainings in a variety of areas that bring value to our agency! Helping our agency prepare to face continuous changes and growth that is a huge part of who we are! Thank you WACF for delivering much needed education and support!”

- Julie Vincent, The Source Spokane

2021-22 MEMBERS

WACF consists of nearly 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+K Ingenuity
- Amara
- ANSWERS Counseling
- 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
- Encompass NW
- Excelsior Wellness Center
- Family Counseling Northwest
- Fostering Solutions
- FPAWS
- Friends of Youth
- Grassroots Therapy Group
- Hand in Hand
- Institute for Family Development
- James Matthew Commission
- 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
- Peninsula Youth & Family Services
- 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 Spokane
- 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 for more information.



www.wachildrenandfamilies.org

