

# 2024 Impact Statement



**89**  
Member  
Organizations



**35**  
Staff  
Members



**84**  
Policy  
Meetings



**25**  
Professional  
Education  
Events



**39**  
Corporate  
Sponsors



**18**  
Grants &  
Contracts



**8**  
Programs  
Dedicated  
to Kids &  
Families

## educate

By leveraging virtual and in-person experiences, events, and educational offerings, we expanded our impact on child and family services.

- Convened the 48th annual Alliance Spring Conference and Alliance Fall Conference **before 957 participants, featuring 52 presenters and 69 sessions.**
- Convened two statewide conferences in partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to advance Trauma Informed Care and Women's Treatment **before 728 participants, featuring 66 presenters and 52 individual sessions.**
- Hosted 25 professional education events reaching **2,250 professionals.**
- Provided **91 hours of Continuing Education training** for behavioral health and foster care professionals.
- Held grant funding information sessions attended by **437 individuals representing foster care, kinship care, residential treatment, and group home agencies.**
- Hosted Foster Home Recruitment Strategy sessions for **254 attendees.**



# advocate

In 2024, we advocated on a broad range of children's policy issues before state departments, the Ohio General Assembly, Governor's office, and federal leaders. Our efforts influenced significant funding opportunities and policy improvements.

## Investments in Children

- ♥ **\$19 million increase in funding** for the Ohio Adoption Grant Program, ensuring more families have access to adoption support.
- ♥ **\$12 million secured** for OhioMHAS to expand the new Mobile Response and Stabilization Services across the state.
- ♥ **\$3 million in placement crisis funding**, providing financial resources to kinship and foster caregivers, foster care agencies, and residential and group home facilities.

We shaped administrative rules and policy and practice frameworks to improve child welfare and behavioral health services:

- ♥ Shaped improvements to the **Continuous Certification Rule Process** at the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY), ensuring a two-year continuing education structure and more continuing education options remain in place.
- ♥ Contributed to the design of **Child Match**, an online platform connecting foster youth with appropriate placements, aiming for efficiency for child welfare professionals.
- ♥ Supported foster parents and children services staff through advocacy on "rehabilitation standards" with DCY.
- ♥ Provided critical insights and support to agencies that participate in the **Next Generation Managed Care and OhioRISE** programs, including assistance with provider **billing, coding, documentation, and credentialing**.
- ♥ Advocated on **mental health parity rules** and **kinship care support changes** at the federal level, which marked significant steps forward for child welfare and behavioral health services across the nation.

Our leadership in advocacy extended to critical legislative measures:

- ♥ Took a leading role in discussions regarding **House Bill 583**, a bill regarding residential and group home standards, and **Senate Bill 105**, impacting ADAMH Board and provider contracting.
- ♥ Engaged in discussions on **House Bill 512**, which would establish emergency placement facilities and create a **Placement Solutions Workgroup**. We were named stakeholders in this legislation.
- ♥ **Federal level advocacy** included the passage of the **Find and Protect Foster Youth Act** in September 2024, securing national reforms for kids in foster care.

We also created new inroads, expanded our influence, and enhanced advocacy resources:

- ♥ Mark Mecum, Chief Executive Officer, represented the Alliance on the DCY **Placement Crisis Workgroup**, **DCY Partners for Ohio's Families Advisory Council**, Ohio Medicaid **OhioRISE Leadership Council**, OhioMHAS **CCBHC Workgroup**, and **Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice**; he also served on the Boards of Directors of Partnership for America's Children and National Organization of State Associations for Children.
- ♥ Sarah LaTourette, Chief Advocacy Officer, took on a leadership role in the **Coalition for Healthy Communities** while Kate Rossman, Policy Manager, served as a Steering Committee member of **Advocates for Ohio's Future** as well as one of the Chairs of the DCY-led Automated Systems Workgroup.
- ♥ Initiated our first-ever **Board of Directors Policy Committee**, creating direct connections between our governing leadership and public policy priorities.
- ♥ Expanded our advocacy team to include **Alex Gonja**, Policy Associate, bringing years of executive and legislative experience to bolster our advocacy and agency support efforts.



Expanded engagement with advocacy stakeholders, participating in over 30 statewide and federal coalitions and workgroups including the DCY Placement Crisis Workgroup, OhioMHAS CCBHC Workgroup, DCY Partners for Ohio's Families Advisory Board, Medicaid OhioRISE Workgroups, Ohio Multi-System Youth Coalition, Coalition for Healthy Communities, Advocates for Ohio's Future, Association of Children's Residential Centers, the National Organization of State Associations for Children, and Partnership for America's Children.

Through these efforts, the Ohio Children's Alliance has made considerable strides in shaping policy and funding that supports children, families, and caregivers across Ohio, as well as the providers who serve them.

# innovate

2024 brought new innovations in service delivery as we grew and expanded our impact.

- ♥ 94% of enrolled Bridges participants and 98% of 21-year-olds in the program exited with stable housing.
- ♥ Bridges served 1,124 young adults in State Fiscal Year 2024.
- ♥ The Menu of Supports Funding Opportunity was launched on October 7, 2024, and received 155 applications by close of the first day.
- ♥ The Alliance adopted Good Grants, an online, sophisticated, yet affordable grant management platform, to manage the Menu of Supports Funding Opportunity.
- ♥ Produced a detailed TCC Program End Report highlighting program and vendor performance, with key successes including zero child expulsions, a reduction in incident reports, and improved DECA scores from pre- to post-assessment after SFY2024 Q1.
- ♥ Secured over \$3.8 million in state and foundation funding opportunities to help the Alliance and Collaborative support community agencies in enhancing the child welfare system.
- ♥ Received over \$26,000 from Ohio's TechCred Department to advance technology-related professional development for key Alliance and Collaborative staff.
- ♥ Developed referral software on the Apricot 360 platform to support the Mental Health Bridge, accelerating the process by capturing and transmitting referral data from child care centers to mental health providers.
- ♥ The Mental Health Bridge program has significantly improved access to care, reducing the average wait time for assessments after child care center referrals from 6–12 months to just 21 days.
- ♥ Every dollar invested in early mental health services yields an estimated \$8-\$15 in savings per child, benefiting families, communities, and the state.
- ♥ Launched Fostering Futures, a career pipeline program for Ohio Opportunity Youth with an interest in the culinary field. Fostering Futures provides a high level of support and barrier reduction, to help youth reach their full potential.
- ♥ With updated data on the locations of current and previously licensed resource caregivers, the It Takes Heart Campaign™ created current target audiences, displaying the behaviors and interests of families.
- ♥ Introduced a Micro-Grant program for Ohio Reach Postsecondary Designated Institutions, allowing institutions of higher education to fund innovative new programs, including housing stipends, a career closet, mentorship programs, and more, for young adults who have experienced the foster care system.

# connect

We advance our mission by connecting advocates, policymakers, and community leaders to facilitate change. More and more, our programs are directly connecting young adults and families to new resources.

Increased community engagement with youth and families.

- ♥ Received a \$126,000 Innovation Grant from OhioMHAS to advance evaluation of Ohio's respite support services. This evaluation will result in a report to assist with Ohio's continued development and support of respite support services
- ♥ Created a new multi-industry partnership with Cameron Mitchell Restaurants, Columbus State Community College, and The Buckeye Ranch for the Fostering Futures Program.
- ♥ Connected with more than 40 million Ohioans through digital advertising to spread the need for and recruit foster and adoptive parents statewide.





# new connections

## New Sponsors in 2024

- ♥ Allventa LLC
- ♥ AM/FM (A Mission for Michael)
- ♥ Barnes Dennig
- ♥ Behavioral Health Billing Solutions
- ♥ Ohio Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Center of Excellence
- ♥ Chaddock
- ♥ Empowering to Elevate
- ♥ Family Centered Treatment Foundation
- ♥ Nuhop
- ♥ REACH For Tomorrow Inc.
- ♥ Brown & Brown
- ♥ Cantata Health Solutions
- ♥ Sevita Health - Ohio Mentor
- ♥ UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Ohio

## New Members

The Ohio Children's Alliance is pleased to welcome our newest members. Your commitment to advancing child welfare in Ohio strengthens our collective mission and expands our capacity to create meaningful change. Together, we're building a stronger network of professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for children, families, and communities across the state. We look forward to achieving impactful progress alongside you.

- ♥ Anthony's Villa
- ♥ Foundations of Love for Youth (FLY House)
- ♥ I Am Boundless
- ♥ Omni Family of Services
- ♥ The Centers
- ♥ Youth Intensive Services

# program spotlight

## Empowering Ohio's Youth through Fostering Futures

Piloted in 2024, the Fostering Futures program breaks barriers for Ohio's opportunity youth by addressing critical gaps in education and employment. It equips young adults with the tools, confidence, and resources to build sustainable careers in the high-demand culinary and hospitality industries. Developed with key partners—Cameron Mitchell Restaurants, The Columbus Foundation, Columbus State Community College, The Ingram-White Castle Foundation, and The Buckeye Ranch—the program removes employment obstacles and provides structured career paths.

Fostering Futures offers college-accredited training at Columbus State Community College, success coaching, financial support, and hands-on experience through paid placements at Cameron Mitchell Restaurants. By fostering personal growth and essential skills, the program strengthens Ohio's workforce and prepares participants to launch confident, sustainable careers.

