

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies

*For more than a decade, our tagline at WAFCA has been “partnering to improve lives.” That focus on partnership was perhaps never more evident than it was in 2023: a year steeped in building and strengthening our partnerships within the Association, but more importantly, with advocates, counties, schools, health systems, and beyond.*

*With your support, we also turned inward to invest in some deeper work to explore and evolve our commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Members led the way, bringing their own agency experiences to light the path forward. We engaged our team, along with a dedicated advisory committee, in challenging discussions requiring listening and sharing, unlearning and relearning. We embraced the “process as the product,” while also looking ahead to the structures and strategies that will form the future of our Association.*

*In 2023, through our core services—facilitating advocacy, member connections, and information sharing—we sustained our network while adding new member benefits, including on-demand continuing education, visibility via podcasting, and risk management resources.*

*The work of the Association is your work. With each initiative, outreach, and advocacy message, we seek to lighten your load, create a connection, and lift up the efforts and expertise of our sector. Thank you for letting our team be a part of your team and for your continued commitment to “partnering to improve lives.”*

*Kathy Markeland.*  
Executive Director, WAFCA

Your  
WAFCA  
team:

Johanna,  
Emily,  
Allyson,  
Kathy



# ADVOCATE

**Member Perspective:** *I can't imagine doing this important work without being a member of WAFCA! WAFCA lifts our collective voices and provides members with a forum to partner.*

Our efforts representing the needs, concerns and successes of WAFCA members in 2023 included significant investment in setting our **WAFCA budget and policy priorities** for legislative action, as well as sharing our time and perspective at multiple tables with cross-sector partners and state administration leaders.

## LEGISLATIVE & STATE ADMINISTRATION ADVOCACY



Supported investment in **early intervention and family-based supports** including Medicaid post-partum coverage for 12 months, state funding for home visitation, adoption of kinship payment increases and a new like-kin definition.

Led on efforts to address **continuum improvements in congregate settings** including psychiatric residential treatment facilities & the option for video recording to advance safety and liability protections.

Supported **equity in mental health funding and access** including increased Medicaid rates for behavioral health and day treatment, full state coverage for community support programs and MA payment for peer specialists.

Led efforts to **raise the age** of juvenile court jurisdiction and supported other **youth-focused reforms** such as grants for recovery high schools, and safe harbor for youth experiencing sex trafficking.

Supported efforts to **grow our workforce**, such as the adoption of the interstate social work and counseling compacts, while also tracking and providing insight on occupational licensing legislation including proposals impacting qualified treatment trainees and out-of-state providers of telehealth.

Engaged members through **action alerts** and most impactfully at our March Leadership Summit as WAFCA leaders developed **key messages (below)** and advocated directly with our panel of legislative committee chairs for mental health and child and family issues.



Medicaid Rates



Home Visiting



School Mental Health



QTT Grants

Hosted DHS, DCF, and DSPS secretaries at WAFCA Board meetings and member conferences to discuss **critical sector issues** & deepen our understanding of **administration priorities**.

Convened monthly with **leaders** in the Division of Safety and Permanence and bi-monthly with the DCF Secretary to coordinate on **system initiatives**.



# ADVOCATE

## COALITION BUILDING & REPRESENTATION IN STATE ADVISORY INITIATIVES



**Mental Health Action Partnership**  
Served as a core organizing member of a collaborative to advance system reform and equitable access to mental health and substance use care. Co-hosted a fall convening of over fifty stakeholders from across the state.

**Milwaukee Youth Behavioral Health Care Delivery Redesign**  
Co-led strategies focused on transforming crisis care services for youth & families in Milwaukee County.

**DCF 56 and Rate Regulation Advisory Committees**  
Appointed to the steering committee to rewrite the foster home licensing rule (DCF 56) and continued leadership of the RRAC.

**Children's System of Care**  
Participated in the Summit hosted by DHS and joined the Children Come First Advisory Committee to inform the DCTS six-year strategic plan.

**DHS START Scan**  
Appointed to subcommittees focused on improving care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs.

**School Mental Health Coalition Guide on School & Community Partnerships**  
Co-led a workgroup with DPI to create a guide on school and provider collaborations to improve student mental health.

**DPI First Five Years**  
Participated in year-long consultation on developing resources to support teacher mental well-being & trauma-informed care early in their careers.

**WCHSA/WAFCA Workgroup**  
Co-led a workgroup to improve county/provider teaming when children are placed in higher levels of care, streamline contract requirements, and engage in joint advocacy for CoC improvements.



# INFORM

**Member Perspective:** *I really appreciate this comprehensive e-newsletter! It's a great source of information and resources!*

## INFORMATION SHARING



**34 newsletters** sent to  
over **1,900 recipients**

## NEWLY DEVELOPED IN 2023



with the **Coalition for Expanding School-Based Mental Health**



**10 episodes** released &  
over **3,000 downloads**

## CONTINUING EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Member Perspective:** *This was the best CEU I've completed in 7 years of my professional career. I appreciate gaining knowledge that I can actually apply and put to use!*



**14 live CE events** for  
over **2,900 participants**

9 webinars | 5 in-person

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

ETHICS & LEADERSHIP

SOMATIC HEALING

THERAPY ESSENTIALS

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

PROVIDER WELLBEING

& MORE

 **2023 events**

### Online Learning System



**12 on-demand courses**  
with **560 CE credits**  
earned by over **230 users**

### CE "Quick Guides"



**11 downloadable guides**  
with need-to-know  
information from CE events

 **CE guides**

### Collaborative Process



Our WAFCA-CE line-up is developed with the support of a **planning committee** of WAFCA Member Agencies.

Topic and presenter **suggestions** are collected monthly from participants.

Each workshop is a collaborative effort between host and presenter to ensure an **engaging** experience.

# CONNECT

**Member Perspectives:** I really appreciate the connections WAFCA facilitates. One of the perks of being a member is the June WAFCA Institute in Door County!

WAFCA provides opportunities to connect with other agencies on a wide variety of topics.

## MEMBER CONVENINGS

**WAFCA prioritized connection with over 80 meetings and events for members and cross-sector partners:**

- Created opportunities for thought partnership and resource sharing with **Communities of Practice:**
  - Continuum of Care
  - Clinical Supervisors
  - Senior Financial Leaders
  - Impact Data
  - Executive Coffee & Conversation
  - **School Mental Health:**
    - Navigators and Clinicians Communities
    - Drop-In Sessions
    - Policy and Communications Committees
- Hosted in-person **leadership events** focused on collaboration, organizational culture, and advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
  - WAFCA Leadership Summit (*March, Madison*)
  - WAFCA Institute (*June, Door County*)
  - Member Meeting (*November, Pewaukee*)

**Thank You to Our Event Sponsors!**



## MEMBER EXPANSION

**WAFCA welcomed four new member agencies in 2023!**

- Access Community Therapies
- Golden Vibes Counseling Center
- Center for Behavioral Medicine
- Oregon Mental Health Services



Oregon Mental Health Services, LLC

## WANT A 'SNEAK PEEK' OF 2024?



 **WAFCA 2024 at a glance**