

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies

It has been said that the best way to manage the tides of change is to have good people in your boat. As we wrap up 2024, I am grateful to be rowing along side all of you and for the many ways that our network continues to show up with “all hands on deck” to help us ride the waves together.

In reflecting on the many highlights of 2024, our relationships and partnerships continue to rise to the top for the list. From facilitating dialogue and advocacy to improving care for children with complex needs to our ongoing learning and authentic sharing in our DEI advisory committee – our members continue to lean into the change and row! As our WAFCA team assesses our impact in 2024, we know that the numbers tell just a small part of the story. The biggest story of our impact is in those daily interactions with our members as we join with you in navigating regulations, relaying resources, and generating solutions together.

At the end of the day, none of us moves through the tides of change alone. We move forward with the aid and wisdom of the collective. A listening ear. A kind word. Stepping in to help, and stepping back to create space for shared leadership. We continue to learn from each of you and know that our practice is better, our sector is stronger, and our communities are healthier because we are working together.

Kathy Markeland.
Executive Director, WAFCA

Your
2024
WAFCA
team:

Allyson,
Johanna,
Kathy, &
Emily



ADVOCATING

Member Perspective: WAFCA partners effectively, connecting child- & family-serving agencies throughout the state to provide a united voice in advocacy and solution-focused problem-solving.

Elevating the voice of our members and the people we support in our communities is at the core of our work here at WAFCA. In 2024, we connected members to [resources for civic engagement](#) and centered stories in our advocacy. Our reach extended beyond legislative action into policy formation and relationship development with state regulators, along with county, school, and lived experience partners.

Justice for Youth

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.

New Tools & Resources

Partnered to introduce bipartisan legislation to create a psychiatric residential treatment facility level of care, the option for video recording to advance safety, and liability protections for child-serving agencies.



Improving the Sector

Hosted DHS, DCF, and DSPS secretaries at WAFCA member conferences to discuss critical sector issues, deepen our understanding of administration priorities, and advance sector improvements.

Engaging State Leaders

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

Children's System of Care

Appointed to the Children Come First Advisory Committee to assist the Division of Care and Treatment Services with implementing its six-year strategic plan.

Mental Health Action Partnership

Continued serving as a core organizing member of a collaborative to advance system reform and equitable access to behavioral health services. Chaired subcommittees for priorities related to Medicaid and workforce.

DCF 56, DCF 57, and Rate Regulation Advisory Committees

Appointed to DCF committees to rewrite foster (DCF 56) and group home (DCF 57) licensing rules. Continued leadership of RRAC.

Milwaukee Youth Behavioral Health Care Delivery Redesign

Co-led strategies for transforming crisis care services for children and families in Milwaukee County.

WI County Human Services Association

Co-presented workgroup findings and recommendations to improve provider/county teaming at WCSHA and WAFCA conferences. Collaborated on efforts to advance Intensive Foster Care in Wisconsin.

Legislative Council Study Committee

Presented recommendations on behalf of the provider community and served as a resource to the Legislative Council Study Committee on Emergency Detention & Civil Commitment of Minors.

INFORMING

CONTINUING EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Member Perspective: There is no better space to find engaging and relevant training, nor to understand what's going on legislatively or with federal or state policy!



14 live CE events for over **3,300 participants**

9 webinars | 5 in-person

ETHICS & BOUNDARIES

PROVIDER WELLBEING

ADOPTION & EARLY CHILDHOOD

HARM REDUCTION

LEADERSHIP & DEI

AND MORE

2024 events

Online Learning System



19 on-demand courses with **750 CE credits** earned by a growing number of users

CE "Quick Guides"



13 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.

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

Conference Contributions

We proudly supported several great conferences in 2024:

- Multicultural Mental Health (*Anesis*)
- Trauma in Our Community (*UWM*)
- *Reaching New Heights* (*WCHSA*)
- *Public Child Welfare* (*WACYCP*)

INFORMATION SHARING



30 newsletters reaching over **3,000 recipients**

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COALITION FOR EXPANDING SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH IN WISCONSIN



Exploring Ethics & Boundaries in School-Based Mental Health engaged 120 clinicians who serve schools.



Change Starts with You(th): Supporting Teen & Adolescent Mental Health was offered with NAMI-WI.



Strategic planning efforts sparked a new offering: **Quarterly School Mental Health Convenings**.

BELONGING

In 2024, WAFCA's DEI Advisory Committee completed a year of consultation with nINA Collective. With that collaborative work as our foundation, we advanced strategic recommendations to our Board; these included the creation of a **new organizational statement** and the formation of a **permanent ABIDE Committee** dedicated to Accessibility, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity.

Statement of commitment co-created with members & endorsed by the WAFCA Board:

The Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies is dedicated to advancing public policy, best practices, and partnerships that support our member agencies and enhance the lives of individuals, children, and families. As a collective voice of the human services and behavioral health sector, we believe that Wisconsin thrives when all people have access to the resources they need to succeed.

While seeking to advance the dignity and humanity of each individual:

- We acknowledge that providers and recipients of services are impacted by systemic discrimination every day.
- We recognize that our beliefs and biases have the power to reinforce or disrupt systemic inequities, and we challenge ourselves and our systems to be more inclusive and equitable.
- We commit to elevating the voices and needs of children, youth, and families as we work toward a more inclusive and equitable future.
- We celebrate our members' differences and the identities that make them unique, while holding each other accountable for deep listening and uplifting the enriching contributions of each individual, organization and community.
- We dedicate ourselves to ongoing self-reflection and recognize that, when we are vulnerable and humbly transparent in our individual journeys, we create space within ourselves and our organizations to authentically and continuously evolve. As a result, we expand our capacity to positively impact our communities and the people living and working alongside us.

Throughout our work in advocacy, education, and community-building, we will advance accessibility, belonging, inclusion, diversity, and equity (ABIDE) in all their forms, including age, ability, economic circumstance, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and any other underrepresented identities.

As an association, we will make ABIDE a core tenet of our practice: guiding our words and actions and informing our collective work and community impact.

Purpose and scope of the permanent WAFCA ABIDE Committee:

The ABIDE Committee will offer guidance and ensure organizational accountability as WAFCA evolves into a more diverse, membership-driven organization. It will be guided by the experiences of those most impacted by our members' services, fostering supportive spaces where everyone feels welcome by...

- Continuing progression on DEI Strategic Priorities, officially approved by the Board in May 2024.
- Applying the lens of ABIDE across all branches of WAFCA's work, including advocacy, membership, education, workforce, and operations.

CONNECTING

Member Perspective: *Being a WAFCA member gives you opportunity to meet colleagues across the state doing similar work, to build relationships, and to have a connection with strong advocates.*

MEMBER CONVENINGS

WAFCA prioritized connection all year with various meetings and events for members and cross-sector partners:

- Created opportunities for thought partnership and resource sharing through **Communities of Practice**:
 - Continuum of Care
 - Clinical Supervisors
 - Senior Financial & HR Leaders
 - Impact Data
 - Executive Coffee & Conversation
 - School Mental Health Gatherings
- Advanced organizational priorities in **Accessibility, Belonging, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion** through collaborative work
- Hosted in-person **leadership events** focused on collaboration, organizational culture, and advancing Equity, Inclusion and Belonging:
 - WAFCA Leadership Summit (March, Madison)
 - WAFCA Institute (June, Lake Geneva)
 - Member Meeting (November, Pewaukee)

Thank You to Our Event Sponsors!



MEMBER EXPANSION

WAFCA welcomed four new member agencies in 2024!

- Canopy Center
- Navarro Professional Counseling Services
- Vibrations Mental Health
- Salisott Parent Coaching & Certification



Canopy Center

Navarro
Professional
Counseling
Services



SALISOTT
PARENT COACHING
& CERTIFICATION

VIBRATIONS
MENTAL HEALTH

THANK YOU, MEMBERS!

