

In 2021, Public Children Services Association of Ohio rolled out exciting modernization strategies designed to improve outcomes for children and families, even as pressures from the pandemic, staff turnover, and placement challenges engulfed county agencies.

Policy Advocacy

PCSAO maintained the historic increase in state funding for children services from the previous **biennium budget** and secured an increase of \$10 million to help counties with costs associated with Family First Act requirements and new kinship programs. A dozen legislators and other key stakeholders got a chance to



walk a day in a caseworker's shoes by riding along with a local worker, giving them an opportunity to understand the successes and challenges of our work. PCSAO testified on seven bills. Highlights included securing

the ability of courts to continue, for good cause, the dispositional hearing beyond the 90-day deadline, helping to reduce unnecessary delays in children's cases, and adding protective service workers to the list of designated individuals who can access protections for publicly available personal information.

Race and Equity

PCSAO embarked on a **learning series** with partners from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, hosting eight interactive online workshops and reflection sessions. Topics included managing difficult conversations about race, addressing implicit bias, and examining the history of racism in children services. Efforts extended



beyond training to advocacy against bills that would harm children or interfere with caseworker training.

Conference

PCSAO returned to an in-person conference, "Facing the Future Together: Our World, Our Commitment" in the fall. More than 400 people came together (including some online) for three days of training, networking, and inspiration. Gov. Mike DeWine offered a tribute to the resilience of frontline workers. More than 30 sponsors engaged with attendees,



and **awards** were presented to families, youth, staff, and advocates.

Workforce

Working with sister associations, PCSAO surveyed county agencies on human resources issues ranging from compensation and benefits to staff diversity and turnover. We also commissioned The Ohio State University College of Social Work to conduct research and produce a **report** on children services workforce recruitment and retention. In memory of a caseworker slain in the line of



duty in 2001, we issued a **call to action** related to worker safety in September. We also developed a learning agenda on safety culture to be launched in 2022 and produced a report examining different child welfare practice models.

Continuum of Care

PCSAO continued to advance its 2018 **Children's Continuum of Care Reform**. We worked with agencies on Family First Act implementation, assisted with the launch of the Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Center of Excellence, and identified capacity-building opportunities for prevention services. We engaged with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to ensure that the design of its services will be accessible and supportive of youth and families involved with children services. We also advocated for improvements to treatment foster care and for reducing barriers to foster care licensure.



Ohio START

With federal and state financial support, Ohio START expanded to 50 counties and enhanced the level of technical assistance and fidelity support provided. The national START model was rated as promising by the Title IV-E Prevention



Services Clearinghouse. A **video** was produced to tell the story of the program's success. For more information, check out START's **2021 Impact Report**.

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"I was proud to lead my fellow directors again in 2021. They stepped up to the monumental task of implementing the biggest state and federal reforms in history in the midst of a debili-



tating workforce crisis and **shortage of viable placement options** for youth with high-acuity needs. Their tenacity led to outstanding accomplishments for our association. As we struggle through these challenges, we remain committed to improving outcomes for children and families by marshalling new resources to tackle the most difficult work in government."

David Haverfield, President

"County government is where change happens in Ohio. PCSAO was proud to partner with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio in our state budget advocacy, and honored to serve every county agency

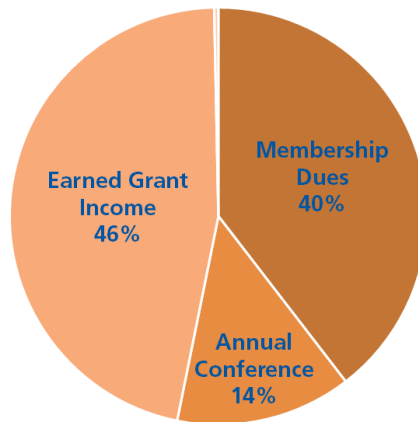


across the state in addressing some of the most significant problems faced by our communities: child safety and permanency, family stability, mental health and addiction, and generational trauma. In 2021, our dedicated members examined ways to make our system more equitable, more safe, and more consistent from county to county, and I am proud to lead a talented staff in achieving those goals."

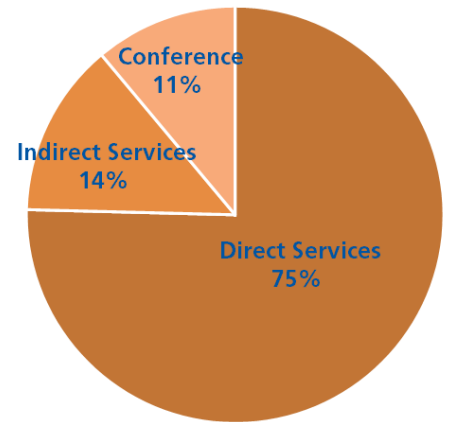
Angela Sausser, Executive Director

2021 Financial Information*

Core Revenue: \$1,442,039



Core Expenses: \$976,570



*Audit pending

Program Grants Beyond Core Operations

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| Ohio Department of Job and Family Services | \$6,996,132 |
| Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services | \$1,907,725 |
| CareSource | \$100,000 |
| Casey Family Programs | \$65,000 |
| Case Western Reserve University | \$36,000 |
| Office of Criminal Justice Services | \$9,791 |

PCSAO is a membership-driven association of Ohio's county Public Children Services Agencies that advocates for sound public policy, promotes program excellence, and builds public value for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities.

