



**INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES  
AND CHILD ADVOCACY**

# **2024 Annual Report**

**For**

**Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy**

**and**

**IARCA Institute for Excellence, Inc.**

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## From the Executive Director

Since starting in January, I've focused my first 10 months on engaging our membership, the legislative and executive branches of Indiana government, as well as working with members of IARCA's team to get up and running in this role. I've truly enjoyed the journey to get up to speed over the first three quarters of the year.

To get to know IARCA's membership better and to assess our members' needs, I spent a good portion of the year meeting and listening to our current membership. Members shared their concerns over increasing strain on the DCS and provider relationship and concerns for the safety of children in Indiana, as well as the increase in acuity of youth which directly impacts capacity. We have shared this perspective at multiple tables with statewide partners and state leaders. I also heard from our members that they appreciate that IARCA delivers training for staff, government relations and advocacy, trouble shooting services, and a supportive network. We will continue to work to support and advocate on your behalf.

Thank you to all our members, IARCA Board Members, partners, and staff for your collaboration!

*Hannah Joy Alte*



## Membership

IARCA is committed to providing quality services to our members and to functioning as a collective voice. We work to advocate, engage, inform, and connect. The current membership includes eighty-five full, six affiliate, and seven associate members and is representative of a diverse array of services to children and families. IARCA works to support our members through various programming, industry updates, and advocacy. We discuss best practices, developing partnerships, quality services, and removing system barriers. Our members provide expertise, brainstorm solutions, participate in work groups and trainings, and help guide policy updates. We are grateful for our dedicated member agencies, and their staff, and thank them for their services across Indiana and commitment to help children and families thrive. IARCA continues to emphasize the value of membership, engagement of current members, and developing a relationship with potential members. We hope to improve outcomes for children and families by strengthening our member organizations so that everyone succeeds.

## Financials

The IARCA Finance Committee meets six times per year to review the financial activities of IARCA and the IARCA Institute for Excellence. Accompanying this report, is the latest balance sheets and profit & loss statements reviewed by the IARCA Finance Committee that ran from January 1, 2024 through the end of July 2024. Please note, the two entities utilize accrual accounting.

For the IARCA Institute for Excellence, the organization is in its second year of a three grant from the Lilly Endowment; this is our seventh grant from the organization which funds our training for child welfare professionals. This year's budget is \$232,500 and we are projected to have a small net revenue for the year. Regarding paid trainings, the Institute is on track to meet or succeed its targeted figured. In 2025, the organization will apply for a new grant as well as continue to work to find additional funding streams. As the Institute is funded mainly in three-year cycles by the Endowment; the second and third year the Institute Balance Sheet assets' shrinks as the resources are spent.

For IARCA, the organization continues to have a strong financial foundation through strategic financial reserves. This year's budget is \$801,867; largely funded by membership and the annual conference. Our IARCA staff have been working with members to bring in outstanding invoices in the last few weeks to bring down our Accounts Receivable amounts, which will help ensure our budget estimates are met. Moreover, the staff has been working to ensure we're implementing opportunities to streamline costs, while still providing quality services to members and our industry.

In regard to policy decisions in 2024, in September 2024; the Finance Committee approved new investment policies for short-term investments for terms of 90 days or less; which still needs full IARCA Board approval.

## Conference Committee

The conference committee, with the leadership of our chair, Meta Rudy, is excited to have a new location at the Embassy Suites Plainfield. The committee has worked hard to bring the latest ideas, training, education, and an opportunity for IARCA members and other stakeholders to come together. The featured keynote on Thursday, September 19 is Dr. Angela Pharris speaking on *Hope Changes Everything*. Dr. Pharris is an assistant professor at the Anne & Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma, director of the Center for Child Welfare Training and a senior research fellow at the Hope Research Center.

Over twenty workshops will cover a wide range of topics, service areas, and training opportunities for every level of staff. We look forward to another new and exciting year of networking, learning, and working together for the positive impact on Indiana's children and families. On behalf of IARCA, the conference committee wel-

comes everyone to the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. We encourage the continued support of one another in this ever-evolving industry with ever-changing demands. It is our *hope* that all who share in this gathering of presenters, providers, and guests leave refreshed with a sense of *hope*, and committed to the pursuit of positive change.

## Home Based Services Work Group

Community Based Services include a wide range of services to help support and stabilize families. With the leadership of our chair, Laura Green, the work group had conversations around supervised parenting time (supporting appropriate referrals so the family has the right level of support), billing delays including meeting with Joseph Fistrovich, the DCS controller, and his team, CFTM experiences (inconsistent and lacking in quality), and understanding the new audit process. IARCA and individual members have spoken with DCS staff about these concerns. Discussions also included supporting Co-Care, the intentional relationship between parents and foster parents, and what an integral role homebased providers play to support the parent.

A survey was completed by 20 member agencies to help identify gaps in community resources for families across the state. Housing and transportation were the two most challenging services to find. Twenty-five members completed a survey to help show the increase in costs and limited availability of cyber and liability insurance requirements as their most likely will be changes in the upcoming DCS contracts.

## Foster Care Work Group

We have had a lot of advocacy and conversation in the IARCA Foster Care Work Group. In 2024, Beth Hazen of Choices Coordinated Care Solutions, took on the role of chair of our work group to provide leadership. Recruitment and retention of foster parents and providing support for working with children with high acuity needs and placement disruptions has been an ongoing topic. Indiana DCS released an Intensive Foster Care RFP, and the group met several times to discuss concerns and viable solutions around providing quality services, responsibilities, and risks. After several meetings, IARCA advocated for more information and time to complete bids. Members also continue to support Co-Care, an intentional relationship between parents and foster, with updated training for staff and families to help lead to better outcomes. The work group also had several small group discussions around updated legislation affecting foster care. The Foster Parent Facebook page was launched in 2022 with the support of DCS to provide an outlet for support and productive conversation. The page continues to help with encouraging staff and foster parents collaborate. Looking ahead, the work group will continue to address these current concerns as well as any future issues.

## Residential Care Work Group

Under the leadership of the chair, Michele Madley, the Residential Services Work Group focused on ways to recruit, retain, and support their staff. While hiring is improving, agencies still are dealing with worker burnout especially as the youth being served are experiencing more trauma and have higher needs. The group also focused on providing structure, best practice, and resources to help support these youth and their families. The group spent time discussing DCS licensing requirements and IARCA communicated with DCS staff, at varying levels of leadership, about incident reporting, interpretation of DCS policies, and work standard letters. IARCA also met with staff from Health Management Associates (HMA) who are evaluating the DCS processes and helping identify ways to strengthen the internal collaboration between ICPS and residential providers. Suggestions have been shared for

the 2025 residential contract as well. Nineteen members participated in the third Annual Residential Statewide Residential Open Houses which are offered to educate DCS staff, CASA staff, probation teams, and other stakeholders on services the respective agencies offer and the support they provide to youth and families. IARCA also developed a 1-page summary of the continuum of services to facilitate conversation with stake holders.

IARCA holds meetings every other month for agency staff who provide Aftercare Services for any youth who received services from them. This space provides an opportunity to discuss challenges, share promising practices, and engage with others.

“Being a member of the IARCA community and its work groups has been incredibly rewarding on both a professional and personal level. The opportunity to connect with agencies and colleagues across the state has allowed me to be part of a dynamic support network within our industry. These connections go beyond simple networking—they foster a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose that is vital to our collective success. Through our collaboration, we are able to exchange valuable insights, share best practices, and support one another in our efforts to elevate the quality and impact of our work in Child Welfare. This unified approach not only enhances our individual contributions but also drives meaningful progress within the broader field, ultimately benefiting the children and families we serve.” Claire Winship, LCSW, Vice President of Family Preservation Services, Firefly Children & Family Alliance

## Public Policy Committee

The IARCA Public Policy Committee focuses on advocacy to promote the health and effectiveness of membership and the children and families served. IARCA’s executive director, board, and individual agencies always seek to coordinate policies and resources to maximize impact to advance the collective agenda. We value and welcome input into this important process.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, IARCA supported SEA 169-2024 and HEA 1051-2024. Senate Enrolled Act 169 updated and codified language that was previously in administrative code. The updates to code support modern practices. House Enrolled Act 1051 demonstrates the state’s support of communication between foster care parents or kinship care parents and a child’s biological parent and the belief that communication between the two parties will lead to better outcomes for the child.

Outside of the general assembly, IARCA leadership has met with DCS leadership to discuss workforce matters, licensing, and referral issues four times and additional meetings are on the calendar to continue the conversations. The executive director has also met with both the Braun and McCormick gubernatorial campaigns to discuss child welfare in Indiana and the concerns of IARCA members.

As we move into the 2025 legislative budget cycle and a new governor takes office, we will remain vigilant that our collective voice is heard. Please be looking for opportunities to join us.

## EON Project

Over the past year, the Outcomes Project has made substantial progress, driven by key updates and fixes that have accelerated our momentum. Radiant Hub developed a new CRM Analytics dashboard to replace our existing systems, significantly enhancing our data visualization and analysis capabilities. We are pleased to announce that Deborah Howard from Crossroads has taken on the role of chair for the Outcomes Committee, providing valuable leadership to guide our initiatives. The migration of the Outcomes Project to the Salesforce platform has been a

complex but rewarding process. System performance has shown positive results, especially in enabling individual agency staff to input case data more efficiently. To further optimize our system, we continue to fine-tune its features and capabilities. In February, we launched training sessions for agency users, partnering with the Radiant Hub team and a videographer to develop on-demand training resources that have improved user knowledge and accessibility. Our external evaluator completed the data compilation for the 2022 annual report, ensuring the highest standards of accuracy and validity. These efforts collectively reflect our unwavering commitment to enhancing outcomes and strengthening our data management processes. In 2024, 44 agencies are using the program.

## Leadership and Workforce Development

### *Leadership Development*

Our Executive Learning Circles provide leaders with essential tools to tackle complex challenges in child welfare. In addition, we have worked with O’Neill School to develop and have offered two Supervisor Learning Circles. The Supervisor Learning Circles have achieved a 90% retention rate, reflecting strong participant engagement and commitment.

On May 9, 2024, we held a Leadership Mini-Retreat at the Courtyard Marriott in Fishers, IN, featuring keynote speaker Lindsay Boccardo. Her sessions focused on building multi-generational teams and optimistic leadership were well-received. The event provided valuable leadership insights and networking opportunities.

### *Workforce Development*

Recognizing the importance of legal expertise in workforce development, we partnered with Brett Hession from Frost Brown Todd LLP to facilitate a series of employment law webinars. These sessions equipped our members with critical legal knowledge, helping them navigate complex employment issues. We initiated discussions with Jean Wright from Grant Regional Career Center to explore potential collaborations that support students pursuing careers in child welfare. To ensure our programs remain relevant and impactful, we conducted research into Indiana’s career pathways and diploma requirements. This research is informing our training programs, allowing us to better align with state educational standards and effectively prepare students for careers in child welfare.

### 2023 Emerging Leaders Cohort participant

”This was program was one of my first step towards growing and enhancing my leadership skills. I had a great time learning about different topics that contribute to effective leadership. Sarah Johnson, Patrick Driscoll and the facilitators provided us with great curriculum that can be applied across various settings to meet the needs of the people we will lead and collaborate with!”

## Trainings and Webinars

IARCA was pleased to continue providing training activities throughout the year with the help of the Lilly Endowment Grant. These funds help IARCA and the IARCA Institute for Excellence support members. We hosted 38 trainings with more than 900 participants attending. In person training included four TBRI opportunities including an Introduction and Overview, Connecting Principles, Empowering Principles, and Correcting Principles. We also offered Red Cross Instructor training to help members have an in-house first aid/CPR instructor.

We continued to grow our virtual training opportunities to allow participants more convenience and flexibility in attendance. Virtual training included a Motivational Interviewing Booster series, Technology and Best Practice,

and a series on understanding trauma and its impact. Dr. Angela Pharris also provided two webinars on *The Science of Hope*. Dr. Pharris is our annual conference keynote speaker.

We are exploring other training programs to increase value and add new opportunities to help practice advancement and organizational stability.

## Indiana Youth Worker Well-Being Project

IARCA is one of five managing partners of an initiative called The Indiana Youth Worker Wellbeing Project. It is a statewide initiative aimed at improving the mental health and overall well-being of youth workers in the state. Recognizing the demanding nature of their work and the potential for burnout, the project seeks to provide support and resources to help youth workers cope with stress, trauma, and other challenges. As a part of this initiative we have developed avenues for support groups, telemedicine, mental health resources, leadership development, and grants to help agencies pursue trauma and DEI informed workplaces. Key components of the project include peer support groups, mental health resources, workplace training, and advocacy. By addressing the unique challenges faced by youth workers, the project aims to create a more supportive and sustainable environment for these essential professionals, ultimately leading to better outcomes for the youth they serve. There is more to come as the managing committee is building plans for the next round of programs.

## IARCA Staff

Hannah Joy Alte	Executive Director	<a href="mailto:hjalte@iarca.org">hjalte@iarca.org</a>
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Ann Davis	Assistant Director	<a href="mailto:adavis@iarca.org">adavis@iarca.org</a>
Kyle Pierce	Finance Director	<a href="mailto:kpierce@iarca.org">kpierce@iarca.org</a>

IARCA members make up a wide array of child welfare organizations.

Our united voice makes a great impact!



85 Full, 6 Affiliate,  
7 Associate Members



44 Members Participate



Meaningful Interactions with  
39 Senators & 18 Representatives



Child and Family Welfare Dinner  
37 IARCA members, 7 legislators, 1  
legislative assistant, and 4 IARCA Foster  
Alumni Team Members



38 Training Events Held



725 Member Employees Trained



42 Work Group/Committees  
& Member Meetings



Over 50 Member Job Postings

“Because of IARCA’s advocacy, the youth-serving agencies throughout our state have a strong, unified, & respected voice in the legislature.” Christina McGovern, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County

## IARCA Board of Directors

### 2024 IARCA Board of Directors

Jeanean Jacobs, Family Ark, President

Michele Madley, Gibault Services, Vice-President

Nathan Samuel, Childplace, Secretary

Dee Szyndrowski, SCAN, Treasurer

Sharese Swafford, Oaklawn

Brandy Stark, George Junior Republic in Indiana

Amy Phillips, YES Home

Rick Rowray, Youth Opportunity Center

Leah Pezzarossi, Open Door Youth Services

Sheila Priester, Vigo County Home for Children

Laura Green, Family Works

Mary Mims, Dockside Services/Clarvida

Shannon Schumacher, The Villages

CC Payne, Family Focus

Jennifer Tackitt-Dorfmeier, Choices Coordinated Care Solutions

Sean McCrindle, Bashor Children's Home

Andrea Goodwin, The Omni Family of Services-Indiana

Tina Cloer, Firefly Children & Family Alliance, Immediate Past President

### IARCA Institute for Excellence Board of Directors

Leah Pezzarossi, Open Door Youth Services, President

Nathan Samuel, Childplace, Secretary

Sven Schumacher, Lutheran Child and Family Services

Laura Green, Family Works

Carrie Schad, Meridian Health Services

Jim Ward, Hillcrest Youth Services

