



PROGRESS REPORT

2022 – 2023 | A year in review

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of my most memorable mornings of 2023 occurred in late March. I was finishing my workout when I heard that the capital gains tax, which Children's Alliance and our partners had worked so hard to pass, was ruled as constitutional by the state Supreme Court. As I paused the treadmill and excitedly began texting my colleagues about the news, I was struck by the thought of how many people I wanted to celebrate this victory with.

As with all of our work at Children's Alliance, it's the connections and relationships that make progress possible. For over a decade, we have worked with advocates, dental practitioners, Tribal members, and coalition partners at the Washington Dental Access Campaign to expand the practice of dental therapy. This year, our collective action paid off when the legislature voted to take a big step forward for oral health access and passed HB 1678, which will allow dental therapists to practice in community-based health care settings across the state and bring dental care to communities where it is often out of reach.

This past legislative session also offered opportunities to broaden our work and foster new relationships. A chance meeting with Absa Samba, an MPA candidate at the UW Evans School, led to Children's Alliance joining the Washington Coalition to End FGM/C. Together we passed SB 5453, which will ban the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting on children in Washington. We also expanded our work in children's health and strengthened coalition connections by working alongside the Health Coalition for Children and Youth to pass bills and budget items aimed at addressing the youth behavioral health crisis.



After sending the initial flurry of messages on that momentous morning in March, I got back on the treadmill and kept running. And that's what we do at Children's Alliance. We celebrate the progress we've made together, then carry on fighting. I am grateful to walk alongside so many powerful partners and advocates in our journey toward a better and more racially just future for all our children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Stephan Blanford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Stephan Blanford

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

The night my husband and I decided to get married, we wrote down the things that were essential to us in the life we wanted to create together. One of the most important things we noted was a shared promise to love each other's children as if they were our own. Today, we have a blended family of six kids and, at last count, 18 grandchildren. Some of those grandchildren were birthed by our kids, some are step-grandchildren, one came to us through a guardianship, and three of them are my brother's grandsons — they didn't have any grandparents nearby, so we took them into the clan. When people look at pictures of my kids and grandchildren, there's a question they often ask that really bothers me: "Which ones are yours?" To which I respond: "They are all mine."

The idea that we all have a shared stake in the well-being of every child in our community is at the core of what Children's Alliance does, and one of the reasons why I support this organization. We each need to look at all of Washington's kids and claim them all as our own. Your kids. My kids. Their kids. Our kids.

At Children's Alliance, we are working to build a better future for every child in our state. We advocate for policy solutions that address the disparate outcomes faced by Black, Indigenous and other children of color because they are our children, and all our children deserve to grow up with an abundance of opportunities to help them reach their vast potential.



Through my involvement with Children's Alliance, I get the opportunity to live my values and make an impact for every child in Washington. If you believe, as I do, that it is our collective responsibility to look out for every child in our community, I encourage you to join us—whether it is contacting an elected official, testifying on a bill, organizing in your community, or investing in our work.

Our children are counting on you.

Sarah Alexander

ABOUT US

Children's Alliance is Washington's statewide, nonpartisan child advocacy organization. You can count on Children's Alliance to ask the critical question: "Is it good for kids?" and to fight hard to make sure the answer is YES.

Mission

Children's Alliance strives to place racial justice at the heart of Washington's laws and budget priorities so that every child can thrive.

Vision

Our vision is that all of Washington's children will have an abundance of what they need to grow up to be the people they dream of becoming.

Values

Children's Alliance's work is grounded in the fundamental belief that a spark of genius exists in every child. But for too many of our children, racism and poverty create barriers that prevent them from unlocking their vast potential. In carrying out our mission, Children's Alliance embraces the following values:

Empowerment

We advocate with, and not for, those who are most impacted by the policy solutions we pursue. We believe our work is most effective when it is built in genuine partnership with people who truly understand what is needed by kids who are furthest from opportunity.

Equity

We unapologetically pursue policy solutions that address the needs of children who are furthest from opportunity. This is the only approach that will shrink and ultimately eliminate historically persistent outcome gaps, building a better shared future for all Washingtonians.

Inclusion

To build a just and inclusive society where every child can thrive, we must uplift the voices of people who have been denied the opportunity to shape the laws and policies that affect us all. We aspire to create and model inclusive coalitions where these voices are welcomed and valued.

Introspection

We believe that racism and anti-Blackness is deeply embedded in all aspects of our society, and is unconsciously maintained by all of us. To dismantle this pernicious racism within the systems that affect our children's lives so profoundly, we must examine how racism and white supremacy show up within ourselves, our institutions, and society. Furthermore, we must develop the courage and leadership skills to dismantle it and model a new way forward.



LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

The 2023 legislative session was momentous for Children’s Alliance. Alongside our partners and advocates we secured the passage of a bill to expand the practice of dental therapy in Washington state, a victory over a decade in the making.

We also expanded our work in youth mental health, building connections and forging relationships that will allow us to continue making an impact in this policy area for years to come.

Leading up to and throughout the session we met with elected officials, gave testimony, convened and contributed to coalitions, provided opportunities for advocates to speak up about issues that matter to them, and kept our members updated on the progress of our priority bills.

What we did together:

1,922

Our advocates sent 1922 messages to their lawmakers to voice their positions on legislation affecting kids and families in our state.

527

We mobilized 527 advocates to take action on bills and budget items that matter to them.

140

Children’s Alliance staff met with legislators 140 times leading up to, and during, the legislative session.

23

We wrote 23 organizational letters to lawmakers outlining our position and recommendations on specific bills and budget items.

HEALTH EQUITY

Children's Alliance worked on a variety of initiatives with partner organizations and coalitions to bring forward bills that will advance racial equity and improve the health of our state's kids and families. Together with our [Washington Dental Access Campaign](#) partners, we worked with bill sponsor Representative Marcus Ricelli to pass legislation that will expand the practice of dental therapy to more clinic settings.



Access to oral health care is a top priority for me. I'm so pleased we were able to pass a bill to expand the practice of dental therapy in my first year as chair of House Health Care & Wellness Committee. I am grateful for the support of Children's Alliance, their partners, and advocates, who have worked tirelessly for over a decade to get this bill across the finish line. With more dental therapists operating in Washington state, we're going to see greater access and better overall health outcomes by taking care of people's teeth.

— **Representative Marcus Ricelli**

We also worked alongside the [Health Coalition for Children & Youth](#) to pass numerous bills that aim to address the youth behavioral health crisis. We partnered with survivors and advocates in the [Washington Coalition to End FGM/C](#) to make Washington the 41st state to ban the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/cutting. Moreover, we joined with other coalitions, including the Washington Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition, the Community Water Fluoridation Task Force, and the Washington Reproductive Health Coalition, to move many other important bills.



PASSED: HOUSE BILL 1678

This bill will authorize dental therapists to practice in community health clinics across the state.



PASSED: HOUSE BILL 1251

This bill will protect community water fluoridation systems across the state.



PASSED: SENATE BILL 1238

This bill will expand free and low-cost school meals to kids through grade four in certain school districts.



PASSED: HOUSE BILL 1580

This bill will create a statewide support system for youth with complex behavioral health needs that are boarded in hospitals.



PASSED: SENATE BILL 5453

This bill will ban the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting on minors in Washington state.

A chance encounter leads to life-changing protections for Washington youth

One of the things that Absa Samba remembers from her first meeting with Stephan Blanford, Executive Director of Children's Alliance, was their instant connection. At the time, Absa was an MPA candidate at the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Policy & Governance. She was taking a class on policy analysis and exploring the possibility of creating a policy to better protect children against the practice of female genital cutting, which at that time was not prohibited in Washington.



Absa Samba (third from left) at the bill signing for SB 5453.

"I knew from that conversation and from learning about what he does that I wanted to talk to him about how to get Children's Alliance on board with that work," she recalled.


Not only was she able to get the support of Washington's largest nonpartisan child advocacy organization, she also gained a mentor who shared invaluable guidance that would result in the swift passage of SB 5453 in the 2023 legislative session. The bill passed with only one vote of opposition in the House and unanimously in the Senate.

"Stephan advised me on how to navigate the political landscape, on prioritizing the development of a communications and media strategy, and most importantly, on bringing together a coalition of partners."

From Children's Alliance's perspective, the partnership was mutually rewarding. "As I learned more from Absa about the issues that are in play when it comes to female genital cutting, it became clear that Children's Alliance needed to stand with the community and the coalition to protect our children," shared Stephan. "Absa insisted that this bill emphasize community education, an approach that promoted racial equity and was in line with our antiracist values. We were honored to be partners in the work and for the opportunity to invite our 7,000 members across the state to advocate along with them for a policy that gives young girls the opportunity to grow into their full selves." Read the rest of the story at bit.ly/ca-absa-story.



EARLY LEARNING



Children's Alliance worked closely with partners in the [Early Learning Action Alliance \(ELAA\)](#) to pass meaningful legislation that strengthens our early learning workforce and increases families' access to affordable quality child care. [Children's Alliance also helped secure important funding](#) in the budget to support the fulfillment of the [Fair Start for Kids Act](#), which ensures that families have access to high quality early learning opportunities.



PASSED: HOUSE BILL 1550

This bill will [establish a statewide Transition to Kindergarten program](#).



PASSED: SENATE BILL 5225

This bill will extend child care subsidy eligibility to child care employees, mixed status immigrant families, and families in therapeutic courts.



PASSED: SENATE BILL 5316

This bill will lower barriers to employment for early learning educators by waiving the fees they face to submit background checks.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

This legislative session, Children's Alliance worked closely with organizational partners and within the [Balance Our Tax Code \(BOTC\)](#) and [Working Families Tax Credit \(WFTC\)](#) coalitions to advance economic justice in Washington state. Through a series of strategically coordinated written and verbal testimonies with partners, email action alerts to legislators, informative social media posts, and letters to budget writers, we garnered greater legislator and public support for progressive revenue that would ensure adequate resources for vital services throughout the state.



PASSED: HOUSE BILL 1477

This bill will provide administrative and technical fixes to the [Working Families Tax Credit](#) to ensure that survivors of domestic violence are eligible to receive vital cash back.

STRONGER TOGETHER

We can't do this work alone. As well as working with advocates and communities, Children's Alliance convenes and participates in a number of statewide coalitions.



Children's Alliance staffs and convenes the Early Learning Action Alliance, a broad coalition of organizations representing a diverse array of Washington nonprofits, professional associations, businesses, and industries. We are united by the belief that all children in Washington state deserve to have the opportunities and support they need in their first five years of life to be prepared for school and a bright future.

The Arc of King County · Child Care Action Council · Child Care Aware of Washington · Child Care Action Council · Child Care Resources · Child Haven · Children's Alliance · Children's Campaign Fund · Children's Home Society of Washington and Trust Foundation · Children's Therapy Center · Columbia City Consulting · Committee for Children · Community Day Center for Children, Inc · Early Care and Education Consortium · Economic Opportunity Institute · Educare Seattle · First 5 FUNdamentals · Foundation for Tacoma Students · Help Me Grow Pierce County · League of Education Voters · Mission: Readiness · MomsRising · Neighborhood House · Nurse Family Partnership · Partners for Our Children · Project Child Success · Puget Sound Educational Service District · Ready Nation · Save the Children · Save the Children Action Network · School's Out Washington · Sound Child Care Solutions · Southeast Seattle Education Coalition · Start Early · Teach for America - Washington · Tiny Trees Preschool · United Way of King County · United Ways of the Pacific Northwest · Washington Association for the Education of Young Children · Washington Association for Infant Mental Health · Washington Childcare Centers Association · Washington Federation of Independent Schools · Washington Home Visiting Coalition · Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility · Washington State Alliance of YMCAs · Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP · Washington State Budget & Policy Center · Washington State Community Action Partnership · Washington STEM · Washington Communities for Children · Washington State Parent Ambassadors · WithinReach

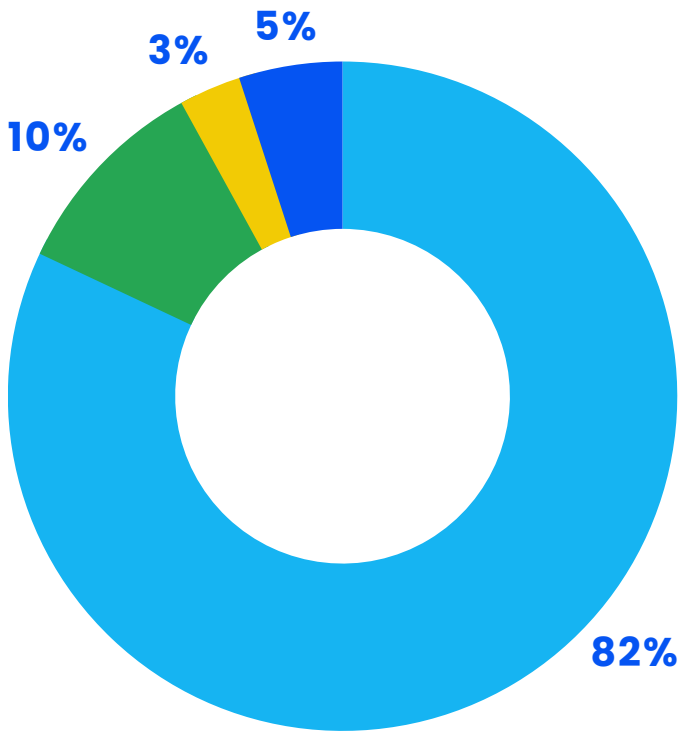


Children's Alliance co-convenes the Washington Dental Access Campaign with our partners at Statewide Poverty Action Network. The coalition includes over 40 organizations, including health care associations, consumer advocates, dentists, dental hygienists, senior groups, Tribal governments and educational institutions, who have come together in support of authorizing dental therapy in Washington.

Alliance for a Healthy Washington · American Friends Service Committee · American Indian Health Commission · Asian Pacific Americans for Civic Empowerment · Center for Multicultural Health · Children's Alliance · Communities of Color Coalition · Eastern WA Voters · Elder Care Alliance · Equity in Education Coalition · Faith Action Network · Health Coalition for Children and Youth · Health Care is a Human Right WA · Healthy King County Coalition · League of Women Voters · LGBTQ Allyship · MomsRising · National Association of Social Workers—Washington · North Sound ACH · Northwest Harvest · Northwest Health Law Advocates · Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board · Olympic Community of Health · OneAmerica · Para Los Niños · Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii · Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action · Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project · Retired Public Employees Council · School Nurse Organization of Washington · Sea Mar Community Health Centers · Seattle Central College · Seattle Indian Health Board · Seattle & King County Public Health · Seattle NAACP · SEIU Healthcare 775NW · SEIU Healthcare 1199NW · SEIU Local 6 · Solid Ground · Statewide Poverty Action Network · SW Washington Communities United for Change · UFCW Local 21 · Washington Community Action Network · Washington Dental Hygienists' Association · Washington Low Income Housing Alliance · Washington Rural Health Association · Washington State Budget & Policy Center · Washington State Hospital Association · Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO · Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program · Washington State Public Health Association · Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby ·YWCA Clark County

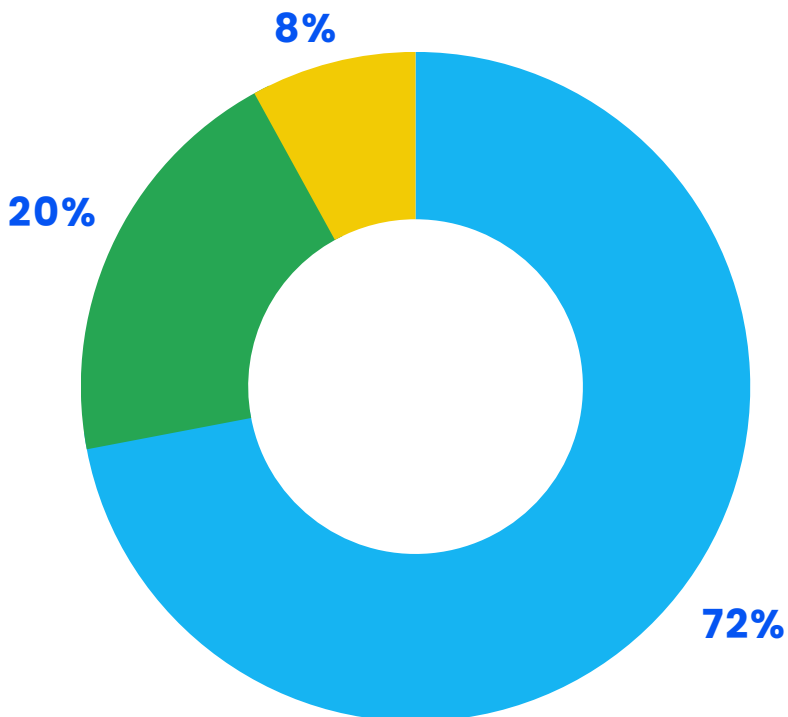
FINANCIALS

For Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)



Income: \$1,747,961

- Grants, Foundations, Corporations
- Contributions
- Organizational Dues
- Events (net)



Expenses: \$1,816,196

- Program Services - 72%
- Admin - 20%
- Fundraising - 8%



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


Our supporters make it possible for us to advocate for policies that advance equity, dismantle racism, and ensure that every child in Washington can grow up healthy, safe and well-prepared for school and life. Thank you to the following for their investment in our mission from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. If you have a correction, please contact us at (206) 324-0340 or funddevelopment@childrensalliance.org.

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Your investment fuels a powerful movement for kids

Creating lasting change takes time and investment. It requires a strategic approach that leverages the proven tools of advocacy. It also requires persistent action, centered around the voices of the children and families who are most impacted by racism and poverty.

Our children need us to take action today so that they can inherit a fair and just future. Children's Alliance accepts charitable contributions in many forms, including credit card, checks, stock, and planned gifts. For more information, visit childrensalliance.org/give. To make a secure online donation, go to childrensalliance.org/donate.

A legacy rooted in values

From an early age, Steve Lansing knew that he wanted to study politics. That interest would eventually lead him to cross paths with Children's Alliance in the fall of 1988. At the time, Steve was the new director for the Lutheran Public Policy Office. Recognizing the importance of building coalitions and eager to connect with like-minded people, Steve reached out to Children's Alliance.

"I had been aware of the organization and was impressed by the work they did. I thought, 'These are good people, and they know what they are doing.'"

As Steve moved on to other professional roles, he maintained a strong connection to Children's Alliance. "In all the time I have been involved with the organization the enduring quality that always remained was that it was good people, trying to do good things for the right reasons."

He has also been a donor for decades, even naming the organization as one of the beneficiaries of his and his wife's estate. "My wife, Bonnie, and I were both raised with the idea that the whole point of our lives was to live it in service of others. Our hope is to have a meaningfully sized estate to pass along to the people in the world who can make good use of the resources."

He continues, "Children's Alliance understands that when it comes to social and economic justice, you have to come together with a lot of people if you want to have any hope of accomplishing anything. We really believe in their vision and mission and hope that our gift will strengthen its ability to adjust and adapt to the changing needs of children."

Read the rest of the story at bit.ly/ca-steve-story.



Steve Lansing at Voices for Children

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HAVE A HEART FOR KIDS DAY

February 15, 2024  Olympia, WA

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