



ANNUAL REPORT

January 2021 to December 2021



Illinois
Collaboration
on Youth

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

1

ICOY had major success with our legislative agenda, including passing Medicaid Technical Assistance Center (MTAC), Implicit Bias Training, Racial Disparities Report, and CCBYS Host Home bills.

2

We have experienced a huge growth in our capacity building services, strengthening community based organizations with resources, and training to better meet the needs of their communities.

3

Training opportunities covered new topics, ranging from DEI on a micro and macro level, working with LGBTQ youth, community and family engagement, and an updated Positive Youth Development Training.

4

ICOY welcomed 7 new members for a total of 106 member organizations.

5

We began living our mission on a new level by serving as an incubator space for the Rising, Elevating, and Leading (R.E.A.L.) Youth Initiative.



MISSION: To promote the safety, health, and success of Illinois' children, youth, and families by acting as a collective voice for policy and practice, and by connecting and strengthening the organizations that serve them.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

A new phrase entered our lexicon at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic: essential workers. These indispensable people include the front-line staff and supervisors of the community-based organizations that make up the Illinois Collaboration on Youth coalition. They have jobs in homeless shelters and afterschool programs. They pick up youth at the police station and meet with families in their homes. They counsel kids who are suffering and help youth apply for jobs. They connect people with services, they teach, they listen, and above all, they care.

Sometimes they have been called heroes. But society has not matched that title with equivalent compensation or recognition for their challenging and emotionally draining work. Our workforce is primarily people who identify as women and people of color – two groups that are consistently disadvantaged in the labor market.

Society has a false narrative about people who are mission-driven and choose to work in our field. In that false narrative, our organizations are called charities, our administrative infrastructure is labeled “overhead” that takes away from services, and our staff are considered volunteers. One result of that false narrative is that low wages for front-line staff and supervisors are built into the foundations of our contracts and funding sources.

In 2021, worker shortages were widespread across the nation and industries. Some call it the Great Resignation. Some point to a loss of childcare, and others say they have reordered their priorities. Some are afraid of contracting a disease, while others fear taking necessary precautions against it. But for many, low wages are not sufficient to earn a living. Sadly, it is not uncommon for front line staff in our field to earn the minimum wage, or slightly above it. And yet we expect that people who come to human services have earned bachelor’s degrees or a master’s degrees in specialized fields, usually picking up student loans along the way.

It is past time that we recognize that human services staff makes it possible for other people to participate in the larger workforce – by providing people with safe places to live, care for their children, support in a crisis, help for their trauma, treatment for their illnesses, and opportunities for children and youth to thrive.

Over the past year, ICOY supported the human services workforce by providing thousands of hours of training and technical assistance, which helped people understand their jobs, develop necessary skills, and identify available resources. We have also advocated to funders that they address the structural inequities embedded in our contracts and grants.

In the coming year, we resolve to double down on raising up the human services workforce, and we look forward to doing it in partnership with you.



Andrea Durbin

Chief Executive Officer

ICOY STAFF GROWTH & UPDATES

We are fortunate to start 2022 by welcoming new staff members to ensure we can continue our work with a larger force to support for our members and partners.

Andrea Durbin, CEO

- Sarah Daniels, Assistant Executive Director
- Alex Hylka, Senior Manager of Technology & Quality Assurance
- **Maha McDiarmid, Chief Program Officer**
- **Randi Slack, Director of Programs**
- Leslie Ress, Training Coordinator
- Karina Velazquez, Training Coordinator
- Rachel Monroe, Child Welfare Coordinator
- Melissa Franada, Communications & Marketing Manager
- Naihal Wajid, Member Relations Coordinator
- **Jocelyn Vega, Director of Trauma Initiatives**
- Heshima Mance, Senior Trauma Specialist
- Gabriela Zamora, Trauma Specialist
- **Ashley Deckert, Director of Public Policy & Government Affairs**
- Chris Boyster, Chief Lobbyist
- Kacy Anderson, Senior Policy Analyst
- Cameron Zelaya, Policy Analyst
- **Seth El-Jamal, Director of Prevention & Intervention Services**
- Denzel Burke, R.E.A.L. Youth Initiative Director
- Thomas Hagan, R.E.A.L. Youth Initiative Director
- Destine Phillips, R.E.A.L. Youth Initiative Director
- Chanel Dotson, Illinois Youth Investment Program Manager
- **Denail Timms, Director of Operations**
- Esther Kaplan, Administrative Assistant
- Maribel Gonzalez, Illinois Juvenile Justice Manager
- Richard Walsh, Compliance Monitor
- Sally Ehrlich, Homeless Youth/ Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services Program Manager
- Ariel Liddell, Prevention & Intervention Manager
- Mercedes Joyner, Community Outreach Coordinator

ICOY MEMBERSHIP IN 2021

ICOY members are part of a growing coalition of human service organizations that collectively make a large impact in Illinois.



SIZE OF COALITION

+17,270 WORKERS EMPLOYED
BY ICOY MEMBERS



IMPACT & SCALE OF COALITION

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS ACCOUNT FOR
+\$2,158,115,535 IN ECONOMIC IMPACT



MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS SERVE **+393,000**
CHILDREN & YOUTH

JOIN THE COALITION

ICOY commits to a wide variety of benefits to our member organizations.

ADVOCACY

- Advocate on their behalf within the legislative and executive branches.
- Shape practices and policies that improve outcomes for children and youth.

REPRESENTATION

- Amplify members' voices in meetings and on committees that involve child welfare, juvenile justice systems, and homeless and runaway youth.

NETWORKING

- Offer member-exclusive events with high ranking state officials, politicians, and peer organizations from across the state and nation.

LEARNING

- Provide newsletters with news, analysis, funding opportunities, and resources.
- Customize training opportunities at a discounted rate.

REACH

- Heighten members' news and job openings through [ICOYouth.org](https://www.icoyouth.org) and social media.

IMPROVING SYSTEMS & STRENGTHENING YOUTH-SERVING PROVIDERS IN 2021

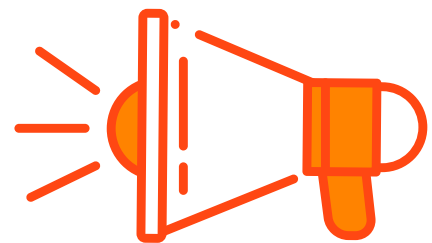
ICOY continues to work towards a state culture that invests to ensure that all children, youth, and families are healthy, inter-generationally successful, and thriving toward their full potential. We believe this is achievable when children and youth have the necessary tools and skills to thrive, and community-based organizations have the capacity and resources needed to serve those communities. **Here is how ICOY continued to build and strengthen Illinois' youth-serving' human services infrastructure:**

Prevention & Intervention



ICOY advocated for and secured funding to develop a capacity building strategy for IDHS funded sites across the state. In partnership with the ACT Now Coalition, Illinois premiere after school advocacy organization, ICOY will work as a hub for organizations that have secured state funding or wish to apply for it and need help navigating the application process, performance standards management, and other general technical assistance.

ICOY also advocated for greater collaboration between Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS) and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. We are proud to partner with the National Runaway Safeline to provide 24/7 information and referral services to youth and families in crisis who are eligible for service through the CCBYS program. CCBYS keeps youth and families together and out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.



Prevention & Intervention



14
Youth

In partnership with the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission Youth Engagement Committee, the Prevention and Intervention team was successful in creating a Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB) in collaboration with Adler University's Institute for Public Safety and Social Justice. To date 14 youth with lived experience have already joined the YAB. We welcome their voices to help shape the course of the juvenile justice system in Illinois.



Rising. Elevating. And. Leading. Youth Initiative (R.E.A.L.) is an unassociated group facilitated by previously incarcerated young people. It is a youth-led, peer-mentor resource hub which addresses the trauma and PTSD of incarceration and post-incarceration community re-entry. R.E.A.L. founders Denzel Burke and Destine Phillips work with young people to address these issues with community education, professional development, the arts, and the use of peace circles for conflict resolution. ICOY is supporting and working with them to ensure they can become a successful standalone 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the future.

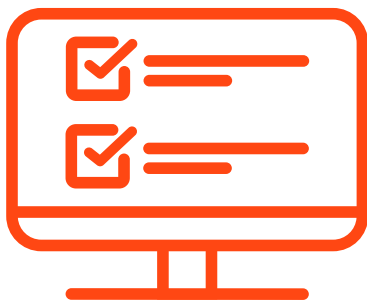
Both Denzel and Destine spent time among five facilities, including the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ). IDJJ has contracted with R.E.A.L. to provide reentry-based programming for up to 12 youth who are currently incarcerated and up to 24 youth who have recently been released from custody. R.E.A.L. provides these programs at three IDJJ Illinois Youth Center facilities.

Trauma Initiatives

The Trauma Initiatives Team has grown and is exploring ideas for new training opportunities, as well as tailoring sessions specific to the needs of ICOY's members and partners. A core value in our trauma training is the importance of self-care and mutual support. Our Team recognizes that strength and cohesion is an essential part of building trauma capacity and intentionally sets aside time to put this value into action.

The Trauma-Informed Capacity Building Assessment Tool for Organizations (CBAT-O)

- The CBAT-O successfully launched on October 1, and ICOY received the highest participation rate since its implementation.
- To support service providers' participation, additional CBAT-O training opportunities were developed, such as informational webinars and live demonstrations.



168

IDHS funded organizations completed the assessment.

1,051

total responses received.

Growing Trauma-Informed Education

This year, the Team began writing blog posts to raise awareness and educate stakeholders on concepts that many of our member organizations face when serving the community.

Topics ranged from LGBTQIA+ youth homelessness, seasonal and holiday depression, and suicide prevention.



Trauma Initiatives

Trauma Trainings

- The Trauma Team consistently cultivated relationships with partner organizations through an inclusive and reflective training model.
- The Team continues to support organizations navigating the consequences and ongoing challenges of COVID-19.
- An additional training day was added to expand options for service providers to attend any training on multiple days.
- Director of Trauma Initiatives Jocelyn Vega developed a training for National Able when the U.S. military withdrew from Afghanistan. This training was designed to support 400 veterans who were evacuating 1000+ Afghan families and community members. Veterans volunteered for case management and faced tremendous challenges in the aftermath of U.S. military warfare and displacement. This trauma-informed training provided actionable steps for self-preservation during ongoing trauma.



ICOY received feedback stating that the Trauma Training session was one of the most healing trainings the organization had ever attended.

Training Department

The Director of Programs Randi Slack created the New Trainer Application, which led to hiring three ICOY Training Champions! We continued to offer a robust array of training opportunities to support providers and strengthen their workforce.



65

training opportunities offered

8

IDHS funded programs reached

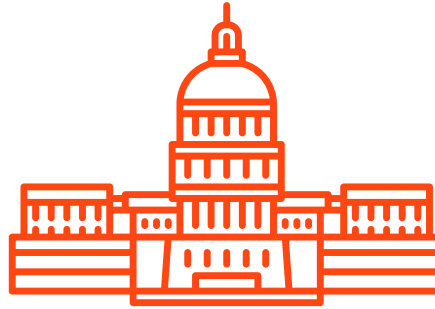
+500

organizations represented at training opportunities

+1400

individuals trained

Policy & Advocacy

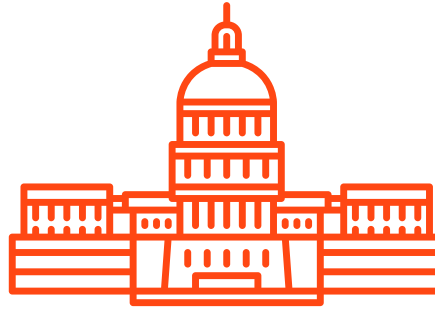


To ensure all children, youth, and families have the tools to be successful, we advocated for policies and resources that achieved the following legislative successes:

- Passed systemic reforms through our Medicaid Technical Assistance Center (MTAC) – Public Act 102-0004 and Host Home Licensing for Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS) – HB692 bills.
 - The establishment of the MTAC will enable smaller healthcare providers, particularly behavioral healthcare providers, to bill Medicaid for services provided, expanding access to care for Medicaid recipients throughout the state of Illinois. This legislation was included in the Illinois’ Legislative Black Caucus historic healthcare legislation.
 - The establishment of new licensing and monitoring criteria for host homes who serve youths aged 11-17. This will allow for increased participation in the CCBYS program and enable more youth to be served.
- Passed measures to begin addressing the racial bias in Illinois’ child welfare system through the Implicit Bias Training for Mandated Reporters bill – Public Act 102-0604 and the Child Welfare Racial Disparities Report bill – Public Act 102-0451.
 - Implicit bias training for mandated reporters aims to reduce racial bias of those who are responsible for approximately 65% of all calls to the abuse and neglect hotline.
 - Going forward, DCFS will be required to produce an annual report and analysis of various metrics that serve as indicators of child wellbeing and will enable year-over-year analysis to demonstrate progress toward eliminating racial disparities.

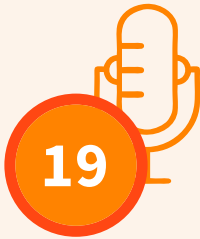


Policy & Advocacy



Legislative successes (continued):

- Advocated for increased funding in the state FY22 budget for child welfare providers and several youth-service programs (e.g. CCBYS, CYS, Teen Reach, and Youth Homelessness).
 - ICOY successfully lobbied for a budget without reductions, in collaboration with Illinois Partners for Human Service and 20 other coalitions and associations.
 - ICOY directly engaged DCFS Leadership around the FY 2023 Budget, advocating for several investments in community-based child welfare services.



The ICOY Policy Team testified through written and oral testimony 19 times for ICOY Champion Bills and the proposed budgets for various Illinois state agencies.

The ICOY Policy Team activated our Quick Response Network 25 times prompting advocacy on policy issues affecting the lives of children and their families.



ICOY Leads the Way to Strengthen the Provider Network

- Introduced YouthCare Billing issues to the Behavioral Health Trades/Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans monthly meeting with Managed Care Organizations convened by the Department of Healthcare and Family Services
- ICOY's member-driven Policy Advisory Committee developed a robust legislative agenda for the General Assembly's 102nd Legislative Session aligned with our guiding principles
- Hosted ICOY's final series of Medicaid Intermediate Billing trainings and a case study on Value-Based Contracting with Lutheran Social Services of Illinois



Illinois
Collaboration
on Youth

Partnering to build brighter futures