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VOICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEBRASKA
IMPACT REPORT

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***A LOOK BACK ON
STEPS FORWARD
FOR NEBRASKA KIDS***

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN:

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

Like many of you, we entered 2021 hoping for a better year that would bring increased normalcy after a tumultuous time. While we remain thankful for the advances in science that have brought us closer to moving beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic, the road back has been longer and more challenging than any of us could have imagined. Our kids are resilient, but we haven't begun to understand the impact of the pandemic on our children's social, emotional and physical health, or education. The pandemic brought to the surface the ways in which our policies fail to support families and create inequitable outcomes for kids. This highlights that there is still so much work to be done and we hope we can count on your continued advocacy for kids in the days and years ahead.

On a personal note, I am leaving Voices for Children in early 2022 after twelve amazing years with the organization and six as Executive Director. It has been an honor to lead this organization and be a part of an incredible community of advocates in Nebraska and nationwide who care about the future of our children. I am proud of the work that we have done together to improve our juvenile justice system, increase access to affordable child care, and address food insecurity for kids. I know that because of the incredible team at Voices and our community of supporters across the state, the future of the organization is strong. The Voices for Children Board is hard at work selecting the next leader to build on the strong legacy of research, advocacy, and community engagement and carry forward the work of creating a stronger and more equitable future for Nebraska kids.

Thank you for all you do to advocate for kids and I hope we can count on your continued support as Voices for Children enters its 35th year.

All the best,



Aubrey Mancuso, MSW
Executive Director



RESEARCH

In 2021, we published the 28th annual Kids Count in Nebraska Report. This publication serves as a trusted resource for Nebraska researchers, service providers, and educators and provides pertinent information on the well-being of all Nebraska children in areas of health, child welfare, education, economic stability, and juvenile justice. A special commentary highlighted early data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child well-being.

All the data contained in the hard copy of Kids Count is also available on NInteractive – a searchable, easy to navigate online tool optimized for use on the go. You can explore NInteractive by visiting www.kidscountnebraska.com.

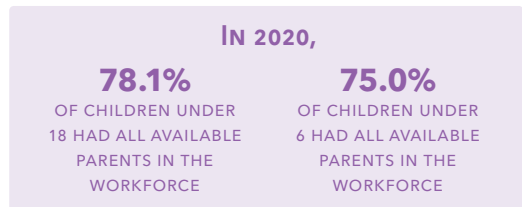
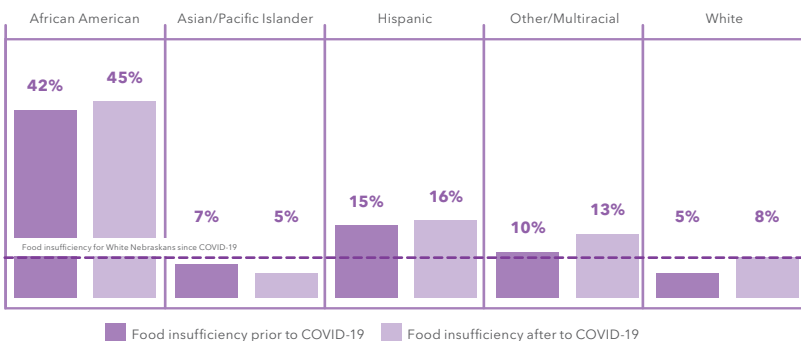


FIGURE 7. FOOD INSUFFICIENCY FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN (2020)



5.4% (8,644)

of Nebraska parents of children 0-5 quit, did not take, or greatly changed their job because of child care problems in 2018/19.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the percent of White households with children who experienced food insufficiency increased from 5% to 8%. Still the food insufficiency rate for White families was lower than that of African American, Hispanic, and other non-White families prior to the pandemic.

POLICY VICTORIES

Thank you to all who stood with us to urge our policymakers to put Nebraska kids first. Here's a recap of some of our pro-kid victories in 2021:



JUVENILE JUSTICE

Increasing access to attorneys for kids:

We know that having meaningful access to an attorney improves outcomes for kids in juvenile court. A bill we have been advocating for over several years was finally passed in 2021. It will ensure that kids have meaningful access to an attorney regardless of where in Nebraska they live.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Temporarily increasing access to food assistance through SNAP:

As families continue to recover from the pandemic, food insecurity rates have remained high. A bill we advocated for in 2021 will help ensure that families can still qualify for food assistance even after slight increases in monthly income for the next two years.



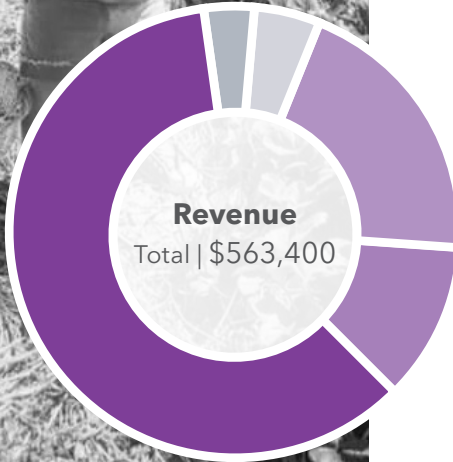
CHILD WELFARE

Temporarily expanding access to affordable child care:

Access to safe and affordable child care is essential to getting families back to work. A bill we helped successfully pass will allow families with higher incomes to continue to qualify for child care assistance for the next two years.

We hope that you will continue to follow us via email, facebook and twitter for opportunities to advocate for kids this year!

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



REVENUE

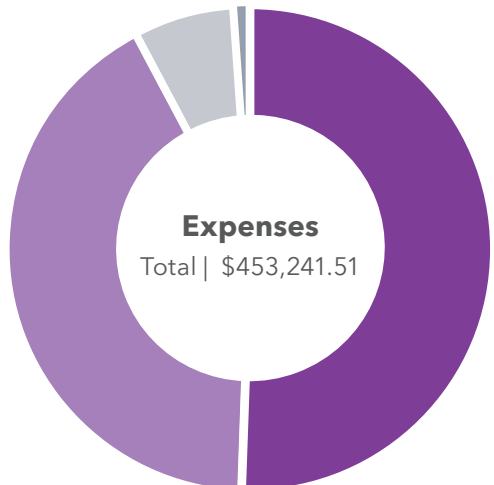
Grants*	\$340,000.00
Special Events	19,830.00
Organization Contributions	\$27,330.00
Individual Donations	\$112,000.00
PPP loan	\$63,172.00
Other	\$1,068.00

Total Revenue \$563,400.00

*Grant Revenue reporting has been updated to reflect the FASB Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2018-08

EXPENSES

Research, Education, & Community Engagement	\$230,179.74
Management & Administration	\$188,640.83
Fundraising	\$30,525.62
Lobbying	\$3,895.32
Total Expenses	\$453,241.51



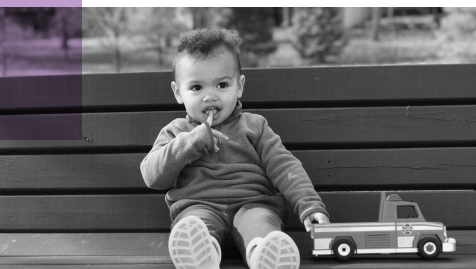
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2021, our Community Engagement Coordinator continued efforts to center and amplify the voices of community members. Voices for Children staff participated in virtual and in person events and projects to continue addressing issues around child welfare, juvenile justice, health, economic stability, and other policy areas to improve the quality of life for children and families in Nebraska.

Coffee and Conversation events allowed us to partner with organizations and staff to highlight topics relating to community engagement and our Pro Kid Policy plan through social media and Zoom in a way that was accessible for community members. We connected community members to staff and other organizations so they could learn how to get involved in advocacy.

With health and safety in mind, we began attending and hosting in-person events, including a nonprofit fair, to further connect with community members. We will continue to increase our in-person opportunities.

We've engaged with youth through presentations or tabling events at universities, increasing internship opportunities, and attending youth led events to support youth advocacy. Our juvenile justice fellowship was an opportunity for youth with lived experience to participate in sessions that refined their advocacy skills and created an opportunity for them to connect with policymakers and other individuals working within the juvenile justice system. Supporting youth advocacy is necessary so that Nebraska can move forward in a way that best supports their quality of life.





ENT

Current efforts to increase the state minimum wage have allowed us to engage with Nebraskans across the state so that they can make their voice heard on this necessary ballot initiative. In partnership with other organizations and passionate individuals, we continue to meet with community members who share how they are personally impacted by Nebraska's current wage. We are committed to continue engagement efforts so that Nebraskans can join us in collecting signatures to raise the wage.

Going forward, we continue to build on our community engagement efforts to ensure that our laws and policies align with the needs and priorities of communities. As an organization, we work to be a resource and support for community members to become their own advocates and to ensure their lived experience is placed at the center of policy decisions. To improve the quality of life for children and families in Nebraska, we must continue to amplify their voices in child welfare, juvenile justice, health, economic stability, and other policy work.

Thanks,
Samantha Chavez





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Sign up for the advokID e-newsletter

The advokID alert is an email newsletter that contains updates about legislative action, news, and analysis from Voices for Children.

<http://voicesforchildren.com/advokid/>

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