

IMPACT REPORT

ALLIANCE
for CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS

SERVING LOS ANGELES SINCE 1992

Advancing Justice *for* Young People

2020
2021



OUR MISSION

is to protect the rights of children in poverty and those overcoming abuse and neglect by delivering free legal services, supportive programs, and systemic solutions.

WE ENVISION

a world in which all children have safe, permanent families, with the support they need to thrive.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



DEAR FRIENDS,

Last year was a year that challenged each of us.

It especially challenged the more than **35,000 young people impacted by LA's child welfare system.**

So, when the world shut down last March, our work accelerated. During the COVID-19 crisis, our alliance of advocates worked tenaciously to ensure that young people in foster care were not forgotten. With court constraints and safety restrictions, cases took up to three times longer. Schools and government offices closed their doors, information was in constant flux, and families in crisis struggled to access basic resources. Still, as I am proud to share in the following pages, our team stepped up for our clients. We advocated for critical services, spearheaded groundbreaking reforms, and educated our community to help nearly 6,000 young people and their families weather this crisis.

It was also a year that magnified the severe, systemic disparities Black and Brown children, families, and communities confront every day. To address the inequities in our child welfare system, we led a partnership that brought

stakeholders together—youth, parents, caregivers, social workers, judges, attorneys, and advocates—to stimulate new dialogue. Together, we proposed and considered practical reforms, grounded in both the history and current reality of child welfare, to render theory into practice, and create transformational change. This will soon launch a comprehensive, multi-year advocacy plan, charting a path towards equity and justice for children and families of color impacted by foster care.

We are inspired by hope, by the resilience of our clients, and by the courage of this community to envision a different, more whole, and more just society for young people. I hope that the victories and voices shared in this Impact Report reveal the power of your support to make a profound difference.

In so many ways, this year—*this moment*—is calling on us all. It takes you and me, and our commitment to justice, to change the future—one young life, one family, one policy, one community at a time. **It takes an alliance.** Thank you for joining ours. Together we can help heal the world for kids and young adults now, and for generations to come.

In solidarity and gratitude,

JENNIFER L. BRAUN
PRESIDENT AND CEO

OUR IMPACT

THIS YEAR, THE ALLIANCE
SERVED NEARLY

6,000
children and
young adults
impacted by
foster care

AND TRAINED

10,500+ partners
to help them better serve and
provide for young people and
families in the child welfare
system.



WHAT WE DO



Adoptions from
Foster Care



Legal
Guardianship



Benefits



Education



Healthcare



Expectant and
Parenting Youth



Transition Age
Youth

WHAT WE DO



Adoptions from Foster Care

When adoptions came to a halt due to court closures at the start of the pandemic, the Alliance led the way for virtual hearings for hundreds of delayed, uncontested adoptions in LA County.

In collaboration with our pro bono partners, we provided legal representation and finalized more than

500
adoptions from foster care through remote technology last year.



Children need homes and a family. They need to be nurtured to grow. You have the ability to change somebody's life, and they'll remember that forever."

— GOODLOE FAMILY



Guardianship

This year, the Alliance helped nearly

300
caregivers obtain legal guardianship,

including in emergency situations, so that they could address medical consent, educational rights, and gain access to urgently-needed benefits for children in their care.



Benefits

By securing public funding for caregivers, the Alliance is able to support families as they open their homes and hearts to children in need of stability.

Our team successfully advocated for

700+
children, youth, and families

so that our clients can access services and support for the children in their care, financial assistance that was especially critical during the pandemic.



During the most difficult time of our lives, the Alliance was there and made us feel that hope was not lost. My mother's passing affected us hard. Nervous about what was going to happen to my four younger sisters, I knew I had to step up and fulfill my mother's wish of taking care of them. Sydney and the Alliance team have been working non-stop to help us stay together. I am so appreciative of everything they've done for us—for answering my calls, for providing us with support especially when times were dark, for always checking up on us, and mostly for never giving up and fighting for us.

— BRANDON B.



The Benefits Program recovered more than **\$600,000** in vital benefits this year.



Education

Children and teens impacted by foster care experience the poorest education outcomes of any student population. **Nearly half of them experience learning disabilities or delays.** And children in foster care change schools an average of 8 times while in care, losing up to 6 months of education with each move. Due to that instability, and other inequities, **only 58% of young people in foster care graduate from high school, and only 3% from college.**

That is why it is critical that our attorneys advocated for early intervention, therapies, and educational services—supporting more than

700
students
this year.

Thanks to the **Saltz Family Early Intervention Advocacy Center**, our team also secures early intervention services for **200+ infants and toddlers** each year.

When it came time to advocate for my son at his IEP meeting, I was so blind walking in. The Alliance team was patient, explained everything, and helped my son get the learning plans and therapies he needs. It feels good to know that they will be there for my son to support with his education until he graduates."

— **APRIL H.**



Healthcare

Far too often, children and young adults in foster care encounter obstacles in obtaining healthcare coverage and vital mental and medical services. A recent study reported a quarter of teens in foster care not being able to access the healthcare they need.

This year, our team advocated for

200 +
young clients
eliminating barriers
to medical services.

Sanaa was born with cerebral palsy. Before we sought assistance from the Alliance, we faced lots of barriers and unanswered calls. Once we connected with the Alliance, the healthcare team and benefits attorneys helped us get the funding we desperately needed for a neck support device, ramp for her wheelchair, a special bed, and more."

— **KIMBERLE D.**



Expectant and Parenting Youth

Our Healthy Teen Families program provides parenting, birth planning, and wellness support for young moms in foster care, as well as access to housing, healthcare, employment, education and resources, so that they can raise healthy babies and build resilient families.

During the pandemic, the Alliance increased services, hosting

350 +
Expectant and
Parenting Youth
conferences

where our social workers advocate and facilitate one-on-one planning to connect young parents and their children with the resources they need to thrive.



Transition Age Youth

Young people exiting the foster care system often face barriers to stable housing, an equitable education, employment, mental and medical healthcare, and support.

This year, our team served

1,500
transition
age youth

through direct legal advocacy, social services, and mentorship to empower them as they transition into adulthood.



Our profound gratitude to the **Alliance of Moms**, a philanthropic member community of **#momsformoms** who make these critical services possible.

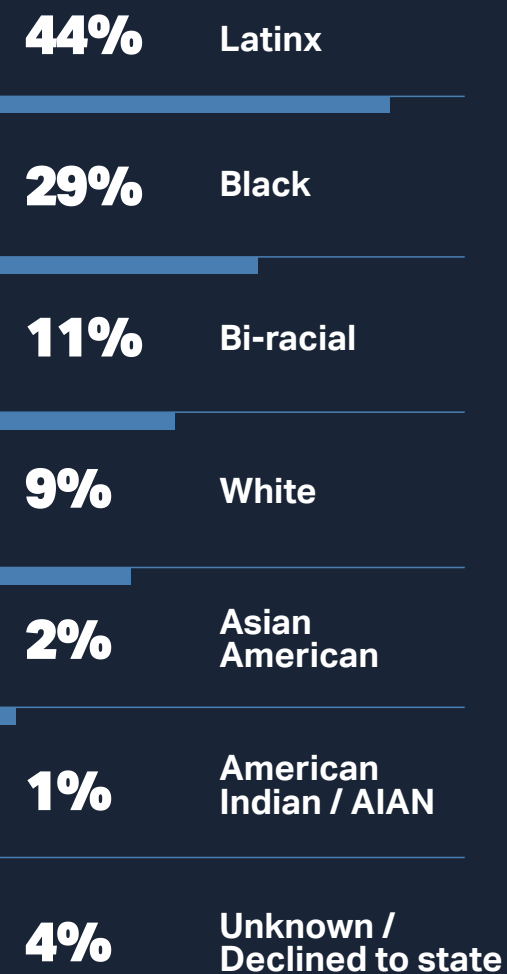


Current and former foster youth have to work twice as hard and be twice as lucky to have the same social support and general opportunities that most people who have stable families are guaranteed. That is why support for TAY is absolutely necessary."

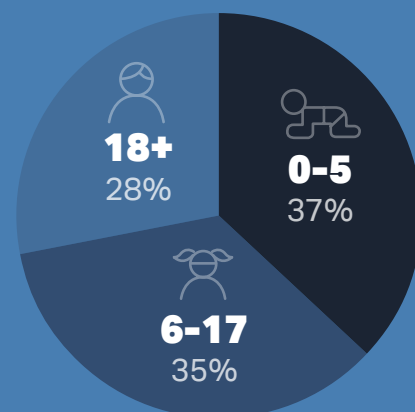
— **CHRISTIAN A.**
LAOYC YOUNG LEADER

Spearheaded by the Alliance, the **LA Opportunity Youth Collaborative (LAOYC)** joined partners to support more than **850 foster youth** in accessing workforce training and employment opportunities (a 15% increase from last year).

WHO WE SERVE



AGES OF OUR CLIENTS



60%

of our clients have identified special needs



15%

of our clients are monolingual Spanish speakers

PHILANTHROPIC SPOTLIGHT

We are grateful for the **Ballmer Group's** partnership with the Alliance and generous support to advance our mission, sustain our programs, and expand our services.



ALYSSA'S STORY

“

Imagine if we gave foster youth more opportunity. Imagine if we had access to more support. ***Just imagine who we could become.***”

Alyssa Aldana—now a 20-year old UCLA student—first entered the foster care system when she was in the 7th grade after her mother had given birth to her brother. “My life changed forever that day,” she recalls. “I was getting out of school, ready to meet my new baby brother, and instead, I was met by a social worker.”

After being evicted from their home and enduring an unstable placement, Alyssa and her brother were taken in by their great grandparents—who became a welcomed source of safety, stability, care, and love in Alyssa's life.

“I'm extremely grateful that I got to stay with family after the pain and trauma of being removed from my mom,” she says. “If they hadn't been there for me, no one else would have.”

Growing up in their care, Alyssa was motivated to do well and make them proud. Sadly, it wasn't long after she was accepted into UCLA—a proud accomplishment—that her great grandmother passed away. In the months to follow, Alyssa struggled with the depression and anxiety that came at the loss of the only stable maternal presence and guardian in her life. At the same time, she lost critical funding that allowed her to pay for housing, stay enrolled in school, take care of herself, and support her family. It felt like everything was falling around her.

A wave of relief came when she finally connected with the Alliance. Our Transition

Age Youth Program team stepped in to assist her in re-entering extended foster care and help her acquire vital funding so that she could remain housed, subsist, and access other critical resources and essentials.

“The Alliance is amazing,” says Alyssa. “I am so grateful for Cheyenne and this helpful team who has been with me through a lot. I was struggling without their help.”

Despite the challenges she's endured, Alyssa now is thriving. And, like many of the young people we are so honored to serve, she inspires us with her persistence, passion, and focus on transforming the future for others. After working through the pandemic as a certified nurse assistant while also maintaining a full-time school schedule, she has her eyes set on her next endeavor. In pursuit of an MBA once she completes her undergraduate education, she is eager to give back and start her own non-profit, empowering the next generation of opportunity youth to succeed.

“I've met a lot of other foster youth during my journey, and they inspire me with their stories,” she explains.

“They should have received more help, more support in life, and they are still surviving despite it all. Imagine if we gave foster youth more opportunity. Imagine if we had access to more support.

Just imagine who we could become.”

We can do great things. We didn't get the resources that most kids had, or any real support systems. We're not less than. We're greater than. Look, I've overcome all of this, and look where I am now.

— **ALYSSA A.**

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Answering the Call during COVID-19

This year, the Alliance supported

60,000+ HOURS OF PHONE CALLS

from caregivers, youth, and advocates seeking assistance.

DIRECT SERVICES

Due to court closures and limited resources, the Alliance saw cases taking **up to 2-3 times longer this year**. In this remarkably challenging environment, our dedicated experts have been working hard every day to ensure young people and families experiencing distress and instability are not forgotten, and that they have access to critical essentials, housing, healthcare, education, employment, and stability.

Thank you to the foundations who supported the Alliance with COVID relief funding, enabling us to be there for our clients when it mattered the most:

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, The Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation, The Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation, The Eisner Foundation, Everychild Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust

EDUCATION

Advocating for Students with Special Needs

During the pandemic, school closures disrupted education for all children. But for vulnerable students with special needs, distance learning was **impossible**—resulting in learning loss and irreparable harm, leaving families struggling to address one of the most fundamental needs of the children in their care for over a year without a plan. We are proud of our Education Program team who worked hard to ensure our clients had access to learning resources and equitable educational plans during the pandemic. And we are especially grateful for our partners at the **Learning Rights Law Center** and **Milbank LLP** who mobilized with us around this injustice and amplified our demand to LAUSD. Together with a broad coalition of advocates, the Alliance called on the district to take immediate action to mitigate learning loss for the more than 80,000 students in LA County with special needs.

“

I am proud of the Alliance’s commitment to expose and help reverse this slow-motion catastrophe. We could not allow malls to be open while schools remained closed—and we will persist in our advocacy for all students, including those with special needs.”

ALEX G. ROMAIN

ALLIANCE BOARD MEMBER
MILBANK LLP



POLICY VICTORIES

Leading Systemic Change and Advocating for Legislative Protections for Young People

AB 89 AND SB 115 | COMMITTEES ON BUDGET

Ensured Continuity of Foster Care Funding for emergency caregivers and secured extended funding for youth in Extended Foster Care as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to emerge.

AB 79 | COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Safeguarded the Family Urgent Response System by protecting continued funding and implementation to provide children, youth and caregivers an alternative to law enforcement response during moments of crisis at home.

AB 1979 (FRIEDMAN)

Successfully co-sponsored legislation that strengthens housing-related supports in the Extended Foster Care Program to ensure that all eligible youth who opt to participate can live in a safe and stable environment and take full advantage of the transition to independence opportunities.





The Path to Racial Equity in Child Welfare

About 85% of young people in foster care are Black and Brown.

Children of color, and specifically Black and Native American children, continue to be overrepresented and experience disparities at every stage of the child welfare system. That is why the Alliance—joined by the **Children’s Law Center of California, Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, and UCLA Pritzker Center for Strengthening Children and Families**—hosted a virtual policy summit bringing together a diverse group of **400+ practitioners, advocates, and people with lived experience** to consider racial inequities that have long persisted in our child welfare system.

With the goal of charting a path towards equity and justice, the summit focused on a set of policy recommendations to address these disproportionalities and to support and empower the children, families, and communities the system is intended to serve.

Our deepest gratitude to **Dick Wolf** for his generous support which empowered the Alliance to launch our diversity, equity, inclusion and justice campaign—focused on advocating for a more just child welfare system.

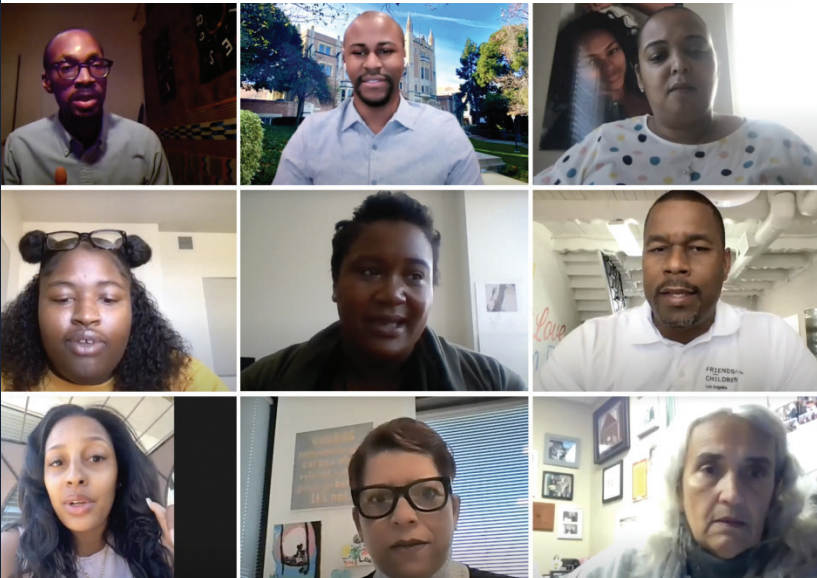


During the time of my open case, I remember battling with the foster agency to make sure my son was placed with a family that represented what I look like. Because my son was so young, I wanted to make sure that he had representation of his Mommy.

At the time, I wasn’t able to provide for him in the way he needed, but I needed my son to have a roadmap to my community, to the essentials of my being.

The system is not friendly to parents. It is not designed to get children back to parents of color. I have been clean now for three years. And my son is now thriving.”

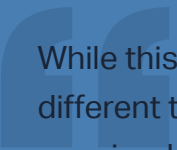
— **ERICKA GLENN**
SUMMIT SPEAKER, PARENT AND ADVOCATE



Virtual National Adoption Day 2020

We are so proud and profoundly grateful to have collaborated with partners this year to ensure that hundreds of families in Los Angeles County could finalize their adoptions from the safety of their homes, despite the pandemic.

Thanks to this effort, we were able to host our first virtual National Adoption Day, completing **more than 150 adoptions from foster care.**



While this National Adoption Day looked different than years before, one thing remained true—children and young adults deserve to find love, security, and stability in a family, and we are deeply honored and committed to supporting them on that path to permanency.”

— **CYNTHIA BILLEY**
ADOPTIONS PROGRAM DIRECTOR



29th Annual Champions for Children

Our deepest gratitude to our **#RWQuarantunes** hosts, **Demi and Richard Weitz**, who brought us all virtually together in March, amplified our mission, welcomed wonderful surprise guests and child advocates, and made our 29th annual fundraiser a great success.

Together on Zoom, with more than 500 attendees, we shared our clients’ inspiring stories of resiliency, enjoyed wonderful musical performances, and raised **\$1.4M** to sustain the Alliance’s life-transforming work.





THE WORK AHEAD

Looking forward, young clients and families in the child welfare system who have been languishing during this pandemic will need our sustained advocacy more than ever before as they seek justice, rebuild, and heal.

Your commitment to the Alliance helps us carry forward the important work of advocating for equity and justice for young people.



Together,
as an
Alliance,
we can do
more.

**DONATE
TODAY.**

[ALLIANCEFORCHILDRENSRIGHTS.ORG/DONATE](https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/donate)

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

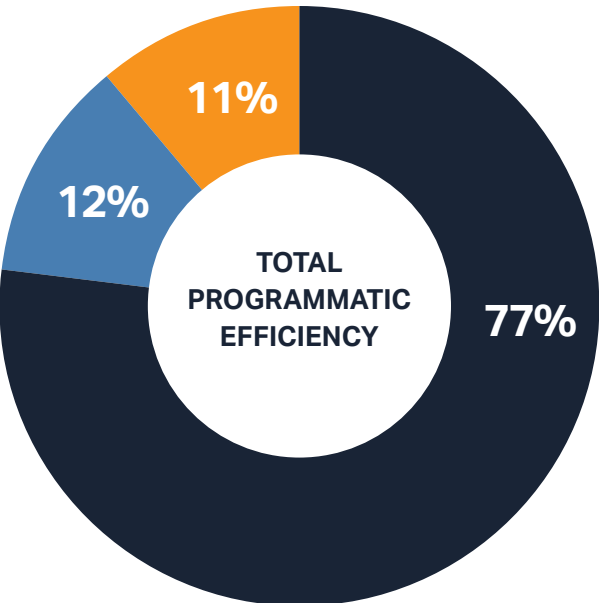
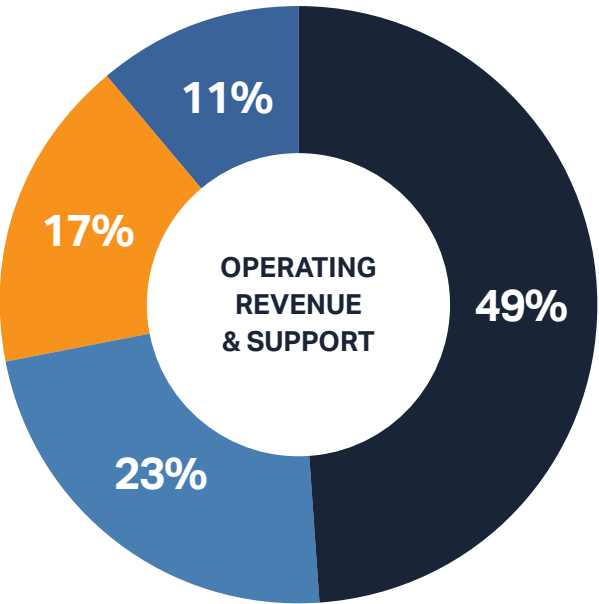
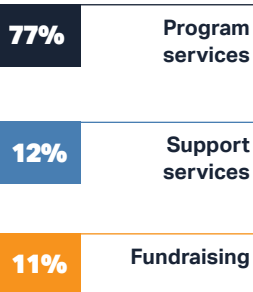
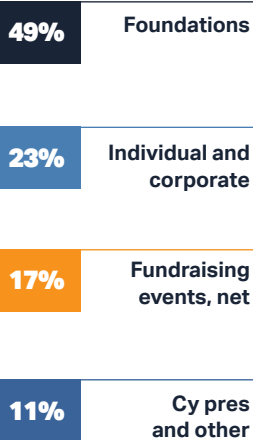
We are dedicated to ensuring every dollar you donate serves our young clients as efficiently as possible.

As a recognized tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Alliance for Children’s Rights seeks to be transparent and accountable in our operations by making our financial information publicly available.

We are proud of our Charity Navigator 4-star rating and GuideStar-awarded Platinum Seal of Transparency for demonstrating strong financial health, accountability, and transparency for 11 consecutive years.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



FINANCIAL SUMMARY for FY2021 with FY2020 comparison		FY2021	FY2020
REVENUE AND SUPPORT	Contributed legal services and in-kind contributions*	\$12,007,785	\$11,692,358
	Contributions and grants	6,696,922	6,693,865
	Fundraising events, net	1,421,113	1,532,622
	Total Revenue and Support	\$20,125,820	\$19,918,845
EXPENSES	Program services	\$16,980,880	\$16,151,749
	Support services	801,247	772,402
	Fundraising	692,121	583,930
	Total Expenses	\$18,474,248	\$17,508,081
FUNDRAISING SUMMARY	Change in Net Assets from Operations	\$1,651,572	\$2,410,764
	Net unrealized and realized investment income	1,878,786	(71,736)
	Change in Net Assets	\$3,530,358	\$2,339,028
	Fundraising expenses as a percentage of total operating expenses**	10.7%	10.1%
ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET ASSETS SUMMARY	Cash and cash equivalents ***	\$2,372,931	\$2,144,101
	Grants and pledges receivable	2,903,221	2,847,290
	Investments	12,612,285	8,792,839
	Prepaid expenses and other assets	178,309	149,795
	Furniture and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	247,918	133,833
	Total Assets	\$18,314,664	\$14,067,858
	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	419,487	461,439
	PPP loan advance	758,400	0
	Total liabilities	1,177,887	461,439
	Unrestricted — Undesignated	3,103,951	1,705,728
	Unrestricted — Board-designated	6,500,000	5,000,000
	Unrestricted — Board-designated endowment	4,000,000	3,250,000
	Temporarily restricted	3,532,826	3,650,691
	Total net assets	17,136,777	13,606,419
	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$18,314,664	\$14,067,858

* The Alliance recorded more than 23,107 hours of contributed legal services donated by law firms, attorneys, summer associates and paralegals for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021. The estimated fair value of these services was \$11,992,719.

** Total operating expenses excludes legal contributed services and in-kind expenses.

*** Cash and cash equivalents include cash held in money market accounts and highly liquid investments.

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I am honored to serve as board co-chair for the Alliance, and to support an organization that remains deeply committed to championing equity and justice for young people. Your continued support energizes and empowers the Alliance to sustain these critical first-response advocacy efforts, so that children, families, and communities hit hardest by this pandemic can endure this crisis, heal, and thrive."

RICK ROSEN
BOARD CO-CHAIR



It truly takes an Alliance. Many advocates, supporters, attorneys, partners, and volunteers come together to fulfill our mission, transform lives, and make possible a life of love, hope and stability for the children and youth in foster care who need our advocacy."

CHRIS B. WALTHER
BOARD CO-CHAIR

OUR PRO BONO PARTNERS

**THIS YEAR,
THE ALLIANCE TEAMED
UP WITH OUR LEGAL
PARTNERS TO PROVIDE**

**23,000+
HOURS**

**of pro bono work,
totaling over**

\$12M

**in legal services
for our clients.***

Together with some of LA's best attorneys, we provide expert legal advocacy and representation to advance justice for young people. Special thanks to the partners and firms who help make this life-transforming impact.

* Calculated hours reflect the 2020 calendar year, and not the fiscal year.



“

It has been such an honor to help young people maximize their potential by representing them in special education matters over the years. Our attorneys have also supported families through adoption cases and have represented teens and transition age youth impacted by the system. Working with the Alliance provides meaningful experiences for our attorneys and our firm greatly values this partnership.”

JAMIE SPRAGUE
LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

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Our deepest appreciation for the law firms and partners who nominated the Alliance for Children's Rights as a cy pres recipient. Funds from these awards help us improve outcomes for children and families in need of justice.

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We appreciate our generous and compassionate partners who make it possible for the Alliance to serve youth and families impacted by our child welfare systems. Our deepest gratitude to this dedicated community of donors who contributed \$500 or more between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. This list recognizes gifts, new pledges, and gift installments made towards commitments from prior fiscal years.

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