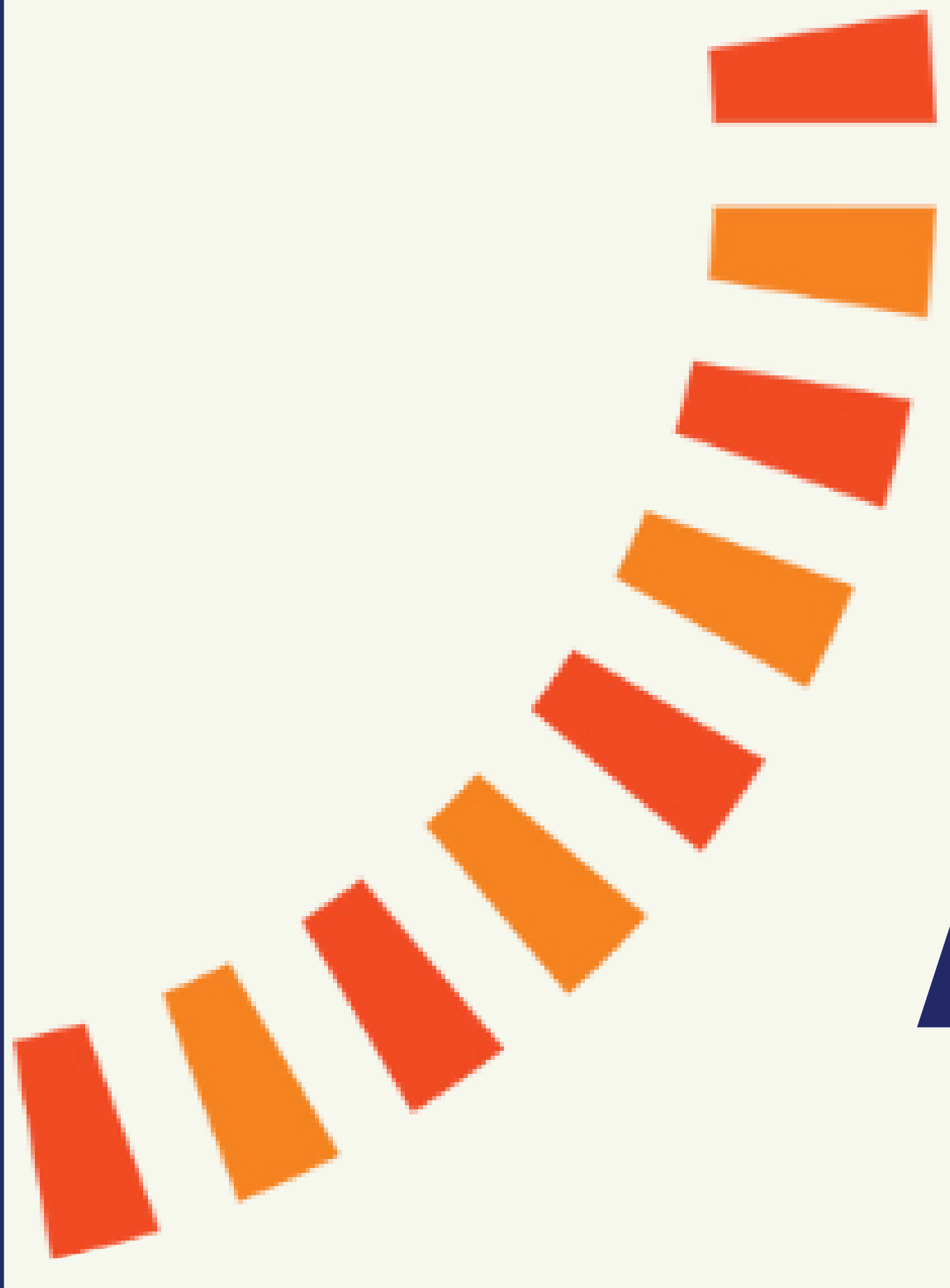




Illinois
Collaboration
on Youth



ICOYOUTH.ORG



ANNUAL REPORT



2024

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As I write this, we are nearing the darkest day of the year, and we are experiencing our first really cold days of the coming winter. Earlier this week, legislative leaders stated that “there’s not going to be any new spending” in Illinois’ fiscal year 2026 budget as they and the Governor will be dealing with a reported \$3 billion deficit. And the incoming Presidential administration just announced that Chicago and Illinois will be part of their “day one” agenda to enact their pledge to undertake mass deportations.

Only 29% of the incoming 104th General Assembly served during previous austere times, dating back to Governor Quinn’s administration and before, and so would have significant experience making difficult budget decisions. In fact, the majority – 58% – of the incoming legislature has worked only with Governor Pritzker, and 40% have only served when President Biden was in the White House.

We will face some challenging times, both fiscally and otherwise, with leaders who may have limited experience in meeting those challenges.

But just as the days will begin to lengthen in a week or so, we have other rays of light to look toward for inspiration and strength.

I always look first to our organizational values – Collaboration, Equity, Dignity, Strategy, and Catalyzing Change. While we have fully defined what these values mean to us on our website, a few phrases leap out at me today:

Building bridges to create shared solutions
Centering, respecting, and affirming everyone’s humanity
Planning proactively and acting intentionally
Taking healthy risks

These values are foundational and will help guide us in finding our path forward.

Next, I look to the strength of our coalition. As you will see later in this report, collectively we served nearly **half a million people** last year and **employed more than 14,500 people**. Our members contributed more than **\$2 billion to the Illinois economy**. This is a muscle that we must flex when we are speaking and acting on behalf of the children, families, and communities that we serve.

About a third of the population in Illinois is age 24 and younger, and half of our young people are children and youth of color. Experts estimate that 4.3% of Illinois’ population, or more than 539,000 people, are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and that 28% are raising children. Almost 700,000 children in Illinois have parents who are immigrants.

Where others may seek to deprive, isolate, or exploit our communities, it is on us to protect, include, and nurture them. I look forward to working with you on this in 2025!

Andi Durbin

CEO, Illinois Collaboration on Youth



ADVANCING CHILD & FAMILY WELL-BEING

ICOY believes that children, youth, and families have a right to have their basic needs met and the opportunities and resources they need to succeed. Services should be trauma-informed, evidence-supported, family-focused, culturally-responsive, and community-based.



In July, ICOY hosted 'Innovation in Child Welfare: Exploring the IFR Model' in the Chicago area. The event, which disseminated research on the ongoing Intact Family Recovery model, highlighted this promising practice to prevent children from going into foster care while their parents engage in the substance use recovery process. Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, DCFS Director Mueller, DHS Secretary Quintero, and several state representatives were able to attend, along with child welfare and treatment providers from around the state.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded ICOY a \$1.3 million Youth Homelessness System Improvement grant on behalf of a coalition of advocates, providers, researchers, and youth in Chicago and suburban Cook County. Over the next 30 months, ICOY and its partners will use this grant to build a youth-centered homelessness response system that improves the information and resource flow between Chicago and Suburban Cook County. The Youth Homelessness System Improvement funding will support work to increase our collective understanding of youths' needs and the barriers they encounter when trying to access services and to build a unified Chicagoland Youth Action Board, with dedicated staff to help sustain and continue this work beyond the life cycle of the grant. Every aspect of the project will integrate meaningful youth engagement and be informed by authentic youth voice from young people with lived experience and expertise.



In December 2024, ICOY's Trauma Initiatives team reported that 3,273 service providers from 184 community-based organizations participated in the Capacity Building Assessment Tool for Organizations, aimed at enhancing trauma-informed care. This is an increase of 5% from the previous year, and reflects ICOY's dedication to building trauma-informed service capacity at youth service providers so young people can heal from their trauma.

STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR

ICOY seeks to improve outcomes for individuals and families by strengthening the human services organizations that support them. ICOY believes that Illinois only succeeds when all its children, youth, and families thrive.

ICOY hosted 162 trainings serving 329 organizations, which were attended more than 6,100 times by over 2,300 individuals. More than 96% of folks who submitted feedback after their session said that they will be more effective in their work because of what they learned during the training.

During the 2024 legislative session, ICOY successfully advocated for \$5.25 million to be allocated to the Human Service Professionals Loan Repayment Program to help reduce the student loan debt burden on those working in human services positions which often require post-high school degrees or certifications. We also successfully eliminated the matching fund requirement for state grants and contracts to alleviate barriers to participation and enable community-based providers to focus on service delivery.



ICOY successfully onboarded 76 new Illinois Youth Investment Program (IYIP) providers and followed up these efforts by connecting many organizations with support from the Illinois Department of Human Services using Illinois WorkNet. ICOY's IYIP Program Manager also hosted Quarterly Advisory Board meetings for providers to share resources, advise ICOY about successes and challenges, and gain insight for management meeting content.

ICOY doubled our capacity-building technical assistance to community providers that receive funding under Illinois' Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA). This focused funding is designed to reduce significant gaps in Illinois' mental health treatment system for youth, young adults, and families that live in areas with chronic exposure to firearm violence and trauma. ICOY's technical assistance helps providers expand their operational, financial, and programmatic capabilities through a trauma-informed and race equity lens.



ADDRESSING RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY



ICOY envisions a just and equitable Illinois that values and invests in ensuring that all children, youth, and families are healthy, thriving, and inter-generationally successful. We seek to eliminate systemic injustice by working toward a world where everyone has access to the resources and opportunities they want and need.

ICOY's Senior Manager of Juvenile Justice brought five youth advisory board (YAB) members from the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and one commissioner to the Coalition of Juvenile Justice in Washington, D.C. During the conference, YAB members met with several legislators to discuss their support for the renewal of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and to advocate for the inclusion of youth voices in justice reform efforts.

Our Annual Member Meeting hosted keynote speakers from the American Bar Association to present on the racist origins of the modern child welfare system, and how state governments have traditionally been incentivized to separate and break up Black and Brown families. The program was well-received and provided important historical context to the work ICOY members are doing to address racial inequities in the foster care system.

ICOY's Prevention & Intervention team collaborated with the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) of Waukegan to put on an event focused on bridging the gap between youth in crisis and law enforcement. Participants ate together and shared their positive observations about the community they worked and lived in. YCC of Waukegan is planning to make this an annual event.

This year, ICOY's DEI Committee fostered transparency and accountability through member consultations, created safe spaces grounded in our core values, and supported impactful initiatives. This year's highlights included launching a DEI training series, hosting their inaugural retreat, starting a Menstrual Equity Initiative, and organizing events like a screening of *When They See Us* to deepen staff engagement and learning.

Additionally, the Capacity Building Training Team implemented a new 4-part DEI training series for FY25. The DEI toolkit has also had over 350 people participate and complete the self-paced training.



MEMBER SNAPSHOT

ICOY Members make up a broad swath of the child welfare and youth services fields in Illinois. Collectively, our impact is even greater than the sum of our parts.



95

**Members
& Partners**



841

**Member
Employees
Trained**



1,292

**Attended
Member Events**



178,802

**Children &
Individuals Served**



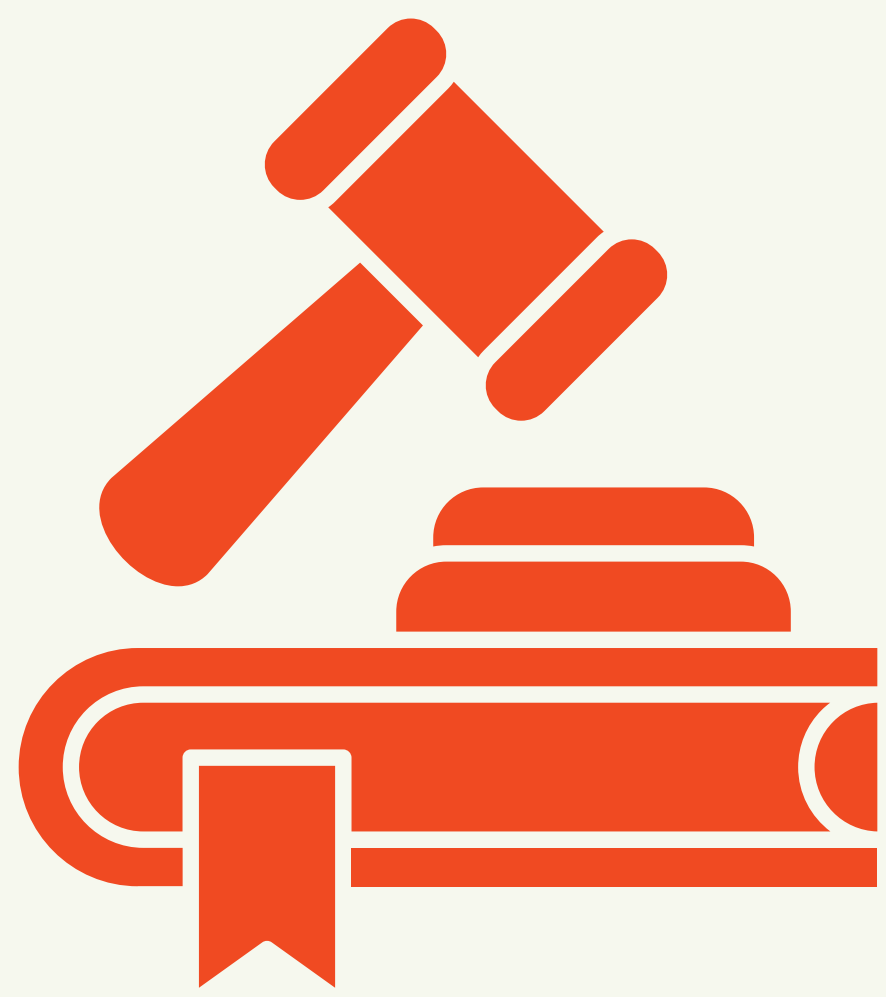
\$2 Billion

**Economic
Impact**



14,580

**Full Time Staff
& Employees**



261

**Legislator
Connects**



54

**Member Events
Held**



234

**Member
Jobs Posted**



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Partnering to build brighter futures

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