



Empowering lives. Enriching futures.

A large, vibrant orange California poppy flower is positioned in the center of the image, set against a blue sky. The background is a photograph of a field of orange poppies, with green stems and leaves in the foreground. The entire image is framed by a white border.

Annual Report

2024

CACFS.ORG

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the unwavering dedication and resilience of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services team and our member organizations.

Together, we serve as a lifeline for under-resourced communities across California, bringing hope, partnerships, and critical support to children, youth, and families facing immense challenges.

Our members—rooted deeply within the communities they serve—are the foundation of our success. Their efforts and innovative approaches have brought positive change, offering stability and opportunity to those who need it most.

Whether through advocacy, capacity building, or direct services, the impact of our collective work continues to resonate.

I am so grateful to our members, partners, staff, Board of Directors and every individual who has contributed to our mission. Your dedication has enabled us to confront challenges head-on and move us toward equity and opportunity for all children and families.

Together, we are shaping a California where every child and family has the opportunity to thrive.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Stoner-Mertz".

Christine Stoner-Mertz, LCSW

ABOUT US

The California Alliance of Child and Family Services leads change and provides vital support for the state's children, youth, and families.

As the leading voice for organizations advocating for at-risk populations, the California Alliance champions policy and services that improve lives.

Joining the California Alliance amplifies your organization's voice and advances its mission. Our expert staff and consultants proactively advocate for policy, legislation, and budgets. Together, we drive meaningful impact for children, youth, and families.



partnerships, informed policy proposals, and relentless dedication, we shape laws, regulations, and budget priorities to ensure they reflect the needs and experiences of our members and the children and families they serve.

Empowering Our Members

Members of the California Alliance gain representation and a platform for their voices to be heard. Through strategic communications, advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives, we ensure that our members' missions are amplified.

The Catalyst Center: Building Capacity & Innovation

Serving as our training and technical assistance arm, bridging the gap between research, policy, and practice with evidence-based innovations, initiatives, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, empowering child and family-serving professionals to deliver transformative care.

KEY INITIATIVES

- **Training Programs:** From trauma-informed care to mental health program management.
- **Technical Assistance:** Supporting organizations in implementing complex regulatory changes.
- **Peer Learning Networks:** Creating spaces for professionals to share ideas and best practices.
- **Youth-Centered Projects:** Initiatives for transitional age youth to address risks and enhance support.

Our Mission & Advocacy

At the core of our work lies a commitment to legislative and regulatory advocacy. We engage directly with the Governor's Office, the California Legislature, and key state agencies, including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Finance, Social Services, Education, and more. Our advocacy extends across critical areas like behavioral health, foster care, juvenile justice, education, and youth development. Through collaborative

Full Circle Health Network: Expanding Access to Care

Launched in 2022, Full Circle Health Network (FCHN) is an integrated network of nonprofit, nationally accredited providers delivering coordinated, community-based services to vulnerable children and families across California.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Contracts with 12 Medi-Cal managed care plans, covering 25% of enrollees statewide.
- A network of over 130 providers across 32 counties.
- Partnerships with key healthcare providers, including Kaiser Permanente Health Plan.
- Over \$10 million in start-up grants, with a majority allocated directly to providers.

VALUE TO MEMBERS

Strengthening Impact. Amplifying Voices. Driving Change.

Membership in the California Alliance is more than just affiliation—it's a partnership built on trust, collaboration, and shared purpose. With over 160 member organizations dedicated to serving vulnerable children, youth, and families across California, we provide a unified voice, essential resources, and strategic tools to ensure every member can make a profound and lasting impact.

Training, Technical Assistance, & Professional Development

At the California Alliance, our members benefit from a strong, collective voice in Sacramento, ensuring their missions are represented in the critical legislative, regulatory, and budgetary discussions shaping California's child welfare,

MEMBER TRAINING BENEFITS

- Discounted access to 100+ annual courses, including webinars, on-demand sessions, and live workshops.
- Opportunities to earn CEUs from CAMFT, STRTP/GH, CPA, SHRM.
- Tailored technical assistance to navigate a variety of complex systems like payment reform.
- Access to specialized resources such as the Enhanced Care Programs Guide and the Provider Vacancy Database.

mental health, education, and juvenile justice systems. These opportunities empower leaders and frontline staff with practical knowledge, actionable tools, and ongoing professional growth.

Media & Communications Support

Our communications and media outreach efforts ensure member agencies' stories, challenges, and successes reach statewide and national audiences.

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

- Media placement opportunities in publications like the LA Times, Capitol Weekly, and EdSource.
- Media training and toolkits, empowering members to engage with journalists.
- Media connections facilitated by our team.
- Uplifting member success stories, updates, & events



Commitment to Equity & Inclusion

Equity is central to our mission. Membership aligns organizations with a commitment to social justice through DEI-focused training and resources. We amplify historically marginalized voices in policy discussions and training while prioritizing youth leadership. Our initiatives break systemic barriers and foster inclusive care systems.

An Investment in the Future

Membership is joining a movement for lasting change for California's children, youth, and families.

Strategic communications support	A powerful advocacy platform	Cutting-edge resources and tools	Targeted training and technical assistance	Collaborative, equity-driven network of leaders
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ADVOCACY WINS

Keeping Members Informed & Amplifying Voices

The California Alliance ensures members have the tools, information, and support they need to drive change. In 2024, we continued to ensure our member's voices were represented in the critical legislative, regulatory, and budgetary discussions shaping California's child welfare, behavioral health, education, and juvenile justice systems

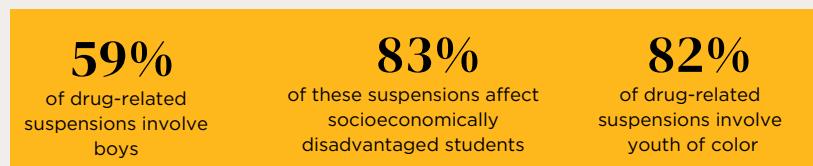


This law keeps students engaged in education, reducing the risk of academic failure and juvenile justice involvement.

Research confirms supportive interventions lead to better outcomes, breaking cycles of trauma and exclusion. AB 2711 positions California as a leader in compassionate school discipline reform.

AB 2711 (Ramos) – Early Intervention Over Punishment

Governor Gavin Newsom's signing of AB 2711 reimagines how schools address student substance use. Instead of punitive measures like suspension or expulsion, students who voluntarily disclose substance use can now access critical support through a public health framework. By treating substance use as a health issue, AB 2711 reduces reliance on disciplinary actions that disproportionately impact:



AB 2802 (Maienschein) – Inclusive Housing for Youth

AB 2802 enhances Transitional Housing Placement (THP) programs by ensuring LGBTQ+ youth, siblings, and co-parenting young adults can access inclusive, flexible housing.

THIS LAW

- Allows youth to share housing with siblings or co-parents, regardless of gender identity
- Prioritizes youth voice and choice in housing decisions
- Eliminates restrictive policies that created barriers to stability

AB 2802 directly benefits at risk transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive youth, co-parenting youth seeking stability for their families, and siblings wanting to live together. By maintaining family bonds and reducing instability, this law improves mental health, academic performance, and reduces the foster-care-to-homelessness pipeline, which disproportionately affects gender-expansive youth of color.



Protecting Critical Programs: Budget Wins

Alongside coalition partners, the California Alliance successfully protected essential services for foster youth and families, ensuring continued access to life-changing programs.

Family Urgent Response System (FURS): Preserved ongoing funding for California's 24/7 support system that helps youth and families address crises and maintain stability in family placements.

Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) Supplement: Secured \$18.8 million (General Fund, ongoing) to support youth transitioning to independent living, ensuring they have the resources for housing stability.

Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program: Protected \$13.7 million (General Fund, ongoing) to assist foster youth in securing and maintaining housing.

Foster Family Agency (FFA) COLA: Achieved a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for FFAs for the first time in 30 years, safeguarding their ability to recruit, train, and support foster families amidst rising operational costs.

Behavioral Health Support: Increased funding for high-fidelity wraparound services to address the complex behavioral health needs of foster youth in family placements.

Future Rate Reform: Established a two-year process to evaluate the true cost of quality programming for FFAs and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs, laying the groundwork for sustainable reforms in 2027.

These advocacy actions will safeguard vital programs, ensuring stability for thousands of youth and families across California

COMMUNICATION

Keeping Members Informed & Amplifying Their Voices

The California Alliance ensures members have the information, tools, and support needed to carry out their vital work. In 2024, our communications strategy focused on timely updates, amplifying member voices, fostering collaboration, and driving advocacy through digital platforms, in-person events, and media engagement.

Member Engagement & Updates

We prioritized consistent communication through email newsletters, the California Alliance website, webinars, virtual meetings, in-person events, and social media.

75+ COMMITTEE MEETINGS

for behavioral health, juvenile justice, education, insurance, child welfare policy, and transitional-age youth, keeping members informed and solving problems

TIMELY DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

like newsletters and direct communications kept members informed on legislation, training opportunities, and advocacy priorities in real-time.

Social Media: A Year of Growth, Connection, & Impact

Social media played a vital role in engagement, advocacy, and storytelling in 2024, where we focused on quality and growth.

22%

Follower Increase



11%

Follower Increase



40%

Growth



As we continue expanding, we're committed to enhancing storytelling, exploring platforms, and creating opportunities for members to access information, share stories, and engage with the California Alliance.

Rallying Media Attention Around the FFA Insurance Crisis

The FFA insurance crisis was a top priority this year. We launched a coordinated advocacy and media campaign to highlight the issue and drive action.

RESOURCE HUB



We developed a FFA Insurance Crisis webpage to centralize resources, including:

- **Background on the crisis**
- **Impact stories**
- **Media kit for advocacy**
- **Guide to engaging with media**

Nearly a dozen major outlets covered the crisis, bringing widespread awareness.

- **California's other insurance crisis could upend life for thousands of foster kids**
- **Historic downtown Stockton building to be converted to housing for foster youth**
- **Rosemead City Council approves controversial supportive housing project**

With media collaboration, strategic outreach, and compelling storytelling, we will build on this momentum ensuring our members' impactful work gets the recognition it deserves.

CA ALLIANCE CONFERENCES



Deepening Connections & Elevating Voices

In 2024, the California Alliance continued to bring together advocates, professionals, and youth from across California for events aimed at uniting voices, advancing advocacy, and driving meaningful change. This year, we expanded the scope and impact of our conferences, creating inclusive spaces where lived experiences, professional expertise, and innovative ideas come together to inspire action and collaboration.

Expanding Professional Growth & Learning

Our conferences have always been about personal and professional growth, and this year was no exception. We delivered 60 hours of programming across 63 sessions, offering attendees access to high-quality training, collaboration opportunities, and actionable insights.

79%

Increase in CEU partnerships.

59

CEUs accredited by CAMFT, STRTP/GH, and CPA*
*SHRM anticipated in 2025

31%

Increase in sponsor and exhibitor participation.

Building Stronger Networks

Advocacy Day was an incredible opportunity for participants to dive into meaningful connections and transformative experiences! Members passionately shared their stories and insights with legislators, making their voices heard and influencing decision-makers.

Elevating Community & Creativity: The TAY Summit

A highlight of the year! Thriving into Adulthood celebrated youth voices, talents, and experiences. This event showcased the creativity and resilience of foster youth with

- **Poetry Readings:** Emotional and thought-provoking performances from Journey House.
- **Pottery Displays:** Beautiful hand-crafted works from Optimists for Youth.
- **Visual Arts Exhibitions:** Powerful visual storytelling from Penny Lane and Didi Hirsch.
- **Community Flea Market:** A vibrant and joyful experience hosted by Jenni's Flower.

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

101

training courses delivered

8200+

learners in live & on-demand sessions

2737

new learning accounts created

45

sessions hosted during our conferences

98%

attendee satisfaction rate

Expanding Knowledge and Impact

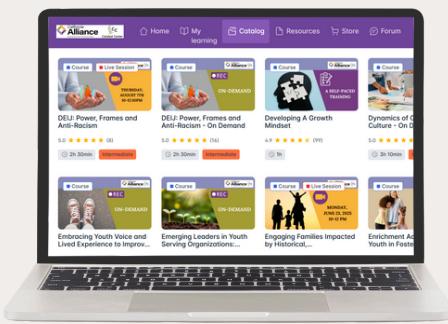
In 2024, the Catalyst Center expanded training and professional development, becoming a key resource for child and family services professionals across California. Through in-person workshops, virtual webinars, and an expanding on-demand course library, we provided essential skill-building and professional growth opportunities.

A Year of Growth and Achievement

The Catalyst Center delivered 101 training courses, reaching 8,200+ learners and creating 2,737 new learning accounts. These programs addressed emerging challenges and built professional capacity.

Expanding Access Through Innovation

We prioritized accessibility and flexibility by expanding on-demand and recorded training to eliminate barriers related to time, location, and availability.



- On-Demand Learning:** Growing library covering trauma-informed care, policy updates, and mental health best practices.
- Conference Sessions:** 45 expert-led sessions featuring panels, workshops, and discussions.
- CEU Opportunities:** 79% growth in CEU partnerships with CAMFT, STRTP/GH, CPA
- Tailored Webinars & Workshops:** Custom sessions on workforce issues, policy reforms, and cultural competency.

Core Focus Areas in Training

These focus areas are not just topics—they represent our commitment to advancing professional excellence and driving systemic change in child and family services.

- Trauma-Informed Care:** Equipping professionals with tools to support youth who have experienced trauma.
- Policy Updates & Advocacy Training:** Helping organizations navigate legislative and regulatory landscapes.
- Leadership Development:** Strengthening management and leadership skills to drive organizational success.
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI):** Promoting culturally responsive practices and advancing equity in service delivery.
- Substance Abuse Prevention:** Providing strategies for substance use challenges among youth and families.

Measuring Success

Every training undergoes comprehensive evaluation to ensure relevance and impact. With a 98% satisfaction rate, professionals express confidence in our programs.



"This course was excellent and informative."



"Course is empowering for self growth."

Training To Drive Real Change

The Catalyst Center's training empowers professionals to create lasting, meaningful change for children, youth, and families, like a caseworker learning trauma-informed care or a policy leader participating in advocacy workshops, every learner contributes to advancing our shared mission.

Explore our training catalog, and join us in strengthening child and family services.



Empowering Learners CDSS & DHCS Collaboration

Partnerships with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) enhanced our training offerings. We provided placement and workforce development guidance and helped STRTP providers navigate regulatory changes.



CATALYST CENTER

Responsive Technical Assistance: Meeting Providers Where They Are

From January to November 2024, the Catalyst Center managed 896 technical assistance (TA) requests, supporting 300+ unique requestors across 47 California counties. These requests addressed key sector challenges including:

- Vacancy Reports
- Provider Information
- Housing Aid
- Legal Aid
- Regulatory Requirements
- Licensing Standards
- Case Consultation
- Enhanced Care Programs
- Institute for Mental Disease Determination
- STRTP Mental Health Program Approval
- Children's Crisis Residential
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
- Payment Reform
- Presumptive Transfer

The Catalyst Center Provider Helpline handled an additional 560 requests, offering real-time support to child and family service providers.

Leading with Research & Innovation

The Catalyst Center integrates evidence-based research, capacity building, and peer connection to uplift historically marginalized communities and address systemic inequities.

Enhanced Care Programs Guide: A comprehensive resource for counties and providers developing individualized programs for foster youth with complex needs. Covers program design, eligibility, staffing models, clinical practices, and funding.

Youth Resource Workgroup: In partnership with CDSS, this workgroup assists providers and counties in identifying alternative placements, interventions, and service enhancements for youth in care.

Statewide Vacancy Database: Streamlining Placement Solutions

In collaboration with CDSS, the Catalyst Center developed and maintains a statewide Vacancy Database, ensuring timely placement solutions for foster youth. This tool minimizes delays and improves care coordination.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Weekly updates requested from STRTPs, FFAs, SFHs, and THP providers.
2. Providers update vacancy status and treatment specializations for real-time accuracy.
3. The Catalyst Center aggregates data, sharing insights with state and county officials for informed placements.

Elevating Equity and Social Justice

In 2024, the Catalyst Center reinforced its commitment to social justice across all initiatives.

- **Ensuring training & TA meet the needs of historically marginalized communities.**
- **Centering youth voices in program development, evaluation, and improvement.**
- **Advocating for inclusive policies & culturally responsive practices across agencies.**

FULL CIRCLE HEALTH NETWORK

Advancing Equity & Transforming Care in California

Full Circle Health Network (FCHN) partners with the California Alliance to advance equity, break systemic barriers, and expand access to high-quality, community-based care. As the bridge between health plans and community-based organizations, FCHN drives California's healthcare transformation, aligning with initiatives like CalAIM.

Mission and Vision: Creating a Healthier California

FCHN is dedicated to reducing healthcare disparities by addressing social determinants of health. Through collaboration with members, providers, and health plans, FCHN ensures comprehensive, person-centered care, enabling every individual—regardless of background—to receive timely, high-quality services.

Innovative Programs For Vulnerable Populations

FCHN plays a critical role in CalAIM by integrating health and social care, reinforcing community-based, person-centered solutions.

Enhanced Care Management

Provides high-touch, in-person care coordination for Medi-Cal members with complex needs.

KEY FEATURES

- **Person-Centered Care:** Individual care plans integrating medical, behavioral, and social services.
- **Community-Based Providers:** Matching members with trusted ECM providers with deep community connections.
- **High-Touch Support:** Lead Care Managers deliver in-person, personalized care where members live or prefer services.

Community Health Workers

CHWs bridge healthcare and social services, offering culturally appropriate education, navigation support, and trust-building.

- **Housing Navigation & Tenancy Maintenance:** Helping members secure and sustain housing.
- **Medically Tailored Meals:** Supporting nutrition and wellness for vulnerable individuals.
- **Keeping Families Together:** Allowing members to receive care near their support networks.

Community Supports

Wrap-around services address medical and behavioral needs, ensuring care in cost-effective, less restrictive environments.

- **Health Navigation & Education:** CHWs help members access and understand available services.
- **Culturally Aligned Care:** Strengthening connections between communities and care providers.
- **Barrier Reduction:** Addressing social and systemic challenges to improve access.

The Full Circle Difference: Bridging Health & Community

FCHN uniquely connects health plans with community-based organizations, driving CalAIM's vision and ensuring equitable care for vulnerable populations.

Improving Access to Services

Streamlining referrals and connecting Medi-Cal members to timely, appropriate care.

Providing Culturally Appropriate Care

Through community referrals & CHWs, ensuring services align with cultural values.

Building Trust

Strengthening relationships between communities and health systems through collaboration and commitment to equity.