



Report to the Board of Directors
January, 2018
Submitted by Connie Phillips, MSW
President and CEO

Winter Wonderland was held on December 16th at Our Saviors Church in Phoenix. Dozens of families attended with their blend of foster and “bio” children, anxious to enjoy the Christmas spirit and receive a bag of gifts that had been donated by people from several congregations and gift cards that had come from all over the state for foster teenagers. What a fun time watching children decorate items, paint little wooden trucks, and feast on goodies! Our volunteer, Brad Van Huesen, came as Santa Claus and made sure that every child had a chance to receive a stuffed animal and whisper their wishes in his ear. I think that the act of opening home and heart to children in need is one of the most holy of expressions of shared faith. The families that are called to this work do it with passion and commitment, knowing it is not easy. Hearing them talk about their experiences was more than inspiring. I am grateful to be able to be a small part of this work.

7 Pillars of High Performance Organizations

A national collection of nonprofit professionals have created a model that is helpful in defining excellent nonprofit leadership, entitled the 7 Pillars of High Performance, which can be found at www.leapofreason.org and is entitled, The Performance Imperative. These pillars are listed below:

Organizations that commit to pursuing high performance generally make the most progress by cultivating seven core disciplines:

*Pillar 1:
Courageous, adaptive executive and board
leadership
(the preeminent pillar)*

*Pillar 2:
Disciplined, people-focused
management*

*Pillar 3:
Well-designed and well-
implemented programs and strategies*

*Pillar 4:
Financial health and
sustainability*

*Pillar 5:
A culture that values learning*

*Pillar 6:
Internal monitoring for
continuous improvement*

*Pillar 7:
External evaluation for mission
effectiveness*

In keeping with my commitment to pursuing these pillars, I have organized my report to correspond to each one.

Pillar 1: Courageous, adaptive executive and board leadership

- Strategic Plan Execution – The reporting dashboard is attached.
- Disruption in the Refugee Resettlement Program – The travel ban and changes in vetting continue to delay processing, slowing the arrival of new refugees. The December court decision has opened the door once again for a limited number of refugees from the banned eleven (11) countries, but it will take time for those eligible to begin to be able to travel.

There are two (2) other events that will create even further disruption to the program. The first is that one of the federal offices has determined that they no longer will allow there to be more than one affiliate for a location. We have been affiliated with LIRS in both our Phoenix and Tucson offices as well as Church World Service in Phoenix, and Episcopal Migration Ministries in Tucson. After a period of review, we have been notified that we will be changing our affiliation to Episcopal Migration Ministries exclusively in Tucson. They made an exception for the Phoenix office due to the size of the program, and we will continue our affiliation with both LIRS and Church World Service. We have been told that the affiliates will move the arrivals around at the national level, so that we will continue to receive the same number as had been planned for the Tucson office.

We received very disappointing news that we have lost the English Language Training contract to Friendly House in Maricopa County. This contract is a fee-for-service contract, and it had been contributing positively to our bottom line. While a small program, it returned approximately \$100,000 each year. We had held the contract for a number of years. We have reviewed the scoring, and it appears that Friendly House scored better primarily around use of technology. The contract becomes effective February 1st, so we are in the process of terminating the English Language trainers and one childcare provider. This also impacts the amount of space that we will need going forward. This is a five (5)-year contract.

- Planning to address homelessness in Maricopa County – Deborah Hutterer has been participating in the Mayor’s Task Force to address Homelessness in the East Valley. They have drafted recommendations and are in the process of preparing to present these to the Mesa City Council in February. They include the expansion of the IHELP program. Additionally, we held a community meeting in partnership with the City of Surprise to explore the concerns around homelessness in their community. Robert Sanders, our Regional Director of Emergency Services, and his staff have been doing outreach to interview people who are homeless in Surprise to gather their input as well. We will be compiling this information and meeting with the City staff to determine if there is enough interest to move forward with proposing an IHELP program in their community.
- Update on Experience Matters Consulting – We received the report and will be presenting it to the Finance Committee. It provides some information, but it does not provide any clear conclusions.
- Update on co-location – The architect firm, TriArc, in partnership with our broker from Colliers, Kathy Foster, have completed their work to determine the amount and type of space needed for co-location. We have begun to consider spaces available. She is

reaching out to the new owner of the Park Central Mall to find out if there is room to negotiate a lower rate than they are currently seeking.

Pillar 2: Disciplined, people-focused management

- We hired Jenny Tatum as our statewide Volunteer Director. This was made possible through a grant from the BHHS Legacy Foundation. Jenny will be building on the work done by the three (3) previous women who worked under the AmeriCorps VISTA program over the past three (3) years and executing our newly designed volunteer program.
- Our HR department, under Dominique's leadership, has been focusing on designing a new performance feedback format that includes our values and core behaviors.
- Adel Irwin, our Northern AZ Community Engagement Director relocated to Minnesota in November. Rather than hire outside, we asked Hannah Miller, who had been exclusively working with community groups in co-sponsorship in refugee resettlement, to step into the role, as the number of refugee arrivals do not warrant a full-time position at this time. We will reevaluate the position after the February luncheon.
- The HR staff have begun to report on our retention rates. The turnover ratio averages 4.9% for the year to date. It is up from the past year (2.35%) at this time, due to program expansion in the Foster Homes and Parent Aide programs. What we find is that people either leave quickly, or they seem to stay. We will be looking to create additional reporting statistics in our HR program going forward.

Pillar 3: Well-designed and well-implemented programs and strategies

- New/Expanded Programs
 - Volunteer Program - The goals for the volunteer program include:
 - Goal 1: Recruit, onboard and mobilize volunteers to serve LSS-SW clients.
 - Fiscal Year 2017-2018, expand volunteerism into Aging & Disability Services and restructure and expand volunteerism in IHELP, increasing service opportunities for community groups, schools, churches and other houses of worship.
 - Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019, expand volunteerism into Children & Family Services, considering church co-sponsorship of foster families.
 - Goal 2: Spread the mission of LSS-SW in the community through offering meaningful volunteer service opportunities and avenues for volunteers to share their experiences with their friends, family and circles of influence.
 - Develop a plan to utilize technology and social media so that volunteers can share stories of LSS-SW.
 - Develop a plan to identify key volunteers to become LSS-SW Champions inviting guests to attend one hour tours of the mission of LSS-SW.
 - Goal 3: LSS-SW views volunteerism as a part of the Fund Development Department. The Volunteer Program Director will increase financial partnerships with volunteers.

- Manage all aspects of LSS-SW In-Kind Donation campaign to increase in-kind giving and community partnerships.
 - Identify and cultivate key volunteers who have capacity to become financial supporters of the organization.
- Program Planning/Development of Logic Models
 - As I had stated earlier, the results of the ASU student projects was disappointing. We are able to use one of the plans as a foundation to create an intentional design for the Women’s Empowerment program and are meeting in February to draft that design. We will be utilizing Logic Models to document all of our programs.
 - As stated earlier, we continue to meet with the City of Surprise and with the collaborative group in Mesa around addressing homelessness. We will be reviewing our program design and drafting the Logic Model for the IHELP program as a part of this work.
- Advocacy
 - I have attached a draft of a proposed legislative agenda for LSS-SW for the session.
- Program Highlights
 - We were grateful to experience an abundance of kindness toward our children and seniors through in-kind and contributions at the holidays. Each of our teenagers in Foster Care and the refugee families in Tucson were able to receive a \$50 gift certificate, and there were an abundance of gifts and sheets donated for the foster children and the individuals and families served in our Emergency Services, IHELP, and Aging and Disability programs. This was a result of the collaborative work between programs, volunteer services, and fund development staff. The holiday program will only improve, as we continue to bring lessons learned forward.

Pillar 4: Financial Health and Sustainability

- Fund Development Report – We continue to benefit from gifts that are associated with the Building Foundations Luncheon that was held on November 9th in Tucson. The total raised was over \$135,000. We have thirty two (32) table hosts for the luncheon to be held on February 13th in Phoenix.
- The Building Foundations Luncheon – We have commitments for thirty two (32) Table Captains. Sponsorships and Lead gifts have exceeded our goal, with \$11,575 in Sponsorship and \$53,000 in Leadership gifts. The following businesses have provided sponsorships: Wells Fargo, Lockton, Central Arizona Plumbing Supply, Cook Native American Ministries Foundation, Vertical, and one individual, Dick Rosenlef. In-kind donors include Print Time and History Theatre.
- A board task force has begun to look into the offer of a donation of land near Showlow. They are currently doing their “due diligence.” An initial review concluded that its sale would not bring significant revenue.

Pillar 5: A culture that values learning

- We have been working with the consulting group at the Nonprofit Finance Fund to develop a proposed expense philosophy and budget plan that considers our full cost of care. Such a strategy will position LSS-SW to evaluate and pursue opportunities, taking reasonable and affordable risks that align with our vision, values, and mission.
- Four (4) members of our Board of Directors, Deborah Hutterer, Dominique Dancause and I attended the second portion of the Governance as Leadership training provided through the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.
- We hosted a training provided through Lutheran Services in America that brought the CEO of LSS in Nevada as well as Mosaic staff. The topic was Advocacy Communication. Deborah, myself, and Stephanie Petrilli participated.

Pillar 6: Internal monitoring for continuous improvement

- Discussion of key metrics – We added financial and HR metrics to our Monthly data report that we are reviewing at each senior team meeting.

I have not addressed Pillar 7, as we currently do not have the capacity to conduct any type of outside evaluation. Not only do we not have resources for such, we also do not have data available.

Strategic Plan Dashboard

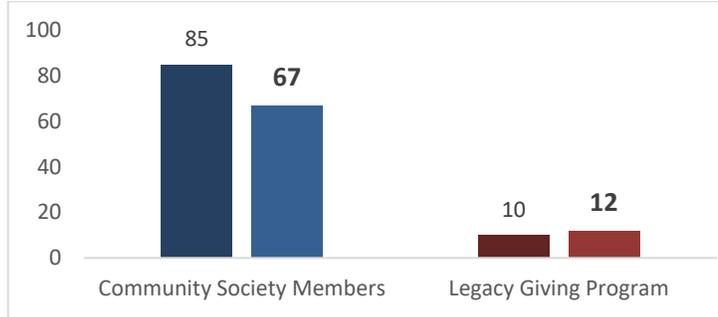
Strategic Plan Objectives:

Legend
C is Complete
IP is In Process
NS is Not Started

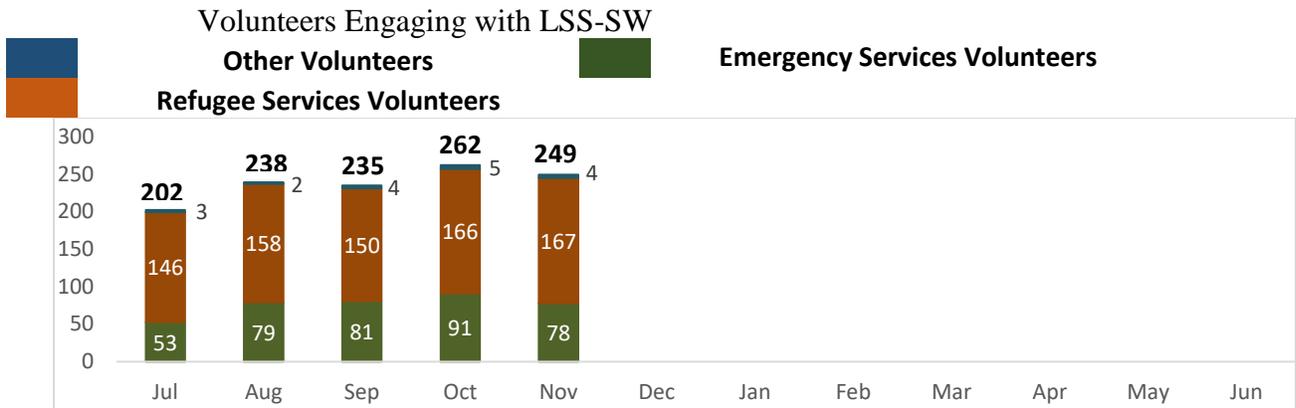
Objective	Status
I.1.i. Discontinue grants/programs that are not financially self-supporting if there is not the willingness to support through fundraising	C
I.1.ii. Conduct one successful fundraising event and grow the Creating Community Society to a total of 85 members by June 30, 2018. <i>See Corresponding Graph Below</i>	IP
I.1.iii. Implement the outreach program to develop donor and volunteer prospects in So. AZ, engaging 300 people in Come and See events by June 30, 2018.	C
I.1.iv. Increase the number of people in the LSS-SW Legacy giving program to a total of 10 by June 30, 2018. <i>See Corresponding Graph Below</i>	C
I.2.i. Hold the CEO accountable for incremental improvement in infrastructure as agreed upon with Board Leadership and stated in the job description.	IP
I.3.i. Create an incremental plan to pay the balance of the credit line by June 30, 2017.	C
II.1.i. Increase Board Membership for a net gain of 2 by June 30, 2017	C
II.1.ii. Create an agreed upon Strategic Plan by February 2017.	C
II.2.i. Develop or procure continuing education programs for board development	IP
II.2.ii. Begin research to create a CEO and Board succession plan	C
II.3.i. Create a process for Board and CEO evaluation	IP
III.1.i. Maintain and deepen current connections with faith communities while widening new ecumenical relationships. Hold the CEO accountable for metrics TBD in cooperation with staff. <i>See Two Corresponding Graphs Below</i>	IP
IV.1.i. Establish and begin to develop relationships with relevant/critical policy makers in the legislature	NS
IV.2.i. Utilize video capabilities and other digital mediums for impact	IP
V.1.i. Assess and evaluate the largest LSS-SW programs using a recognized, prescribed method	C

I.1.ii Conduct one successful fundraising event and grow the Creating Community Society to a total of **85 members** by June 30, 2018.

I.1.iv Increase the number of people in the LSS-SW Legacy giving program to a total of **10** by June 30, 2018.



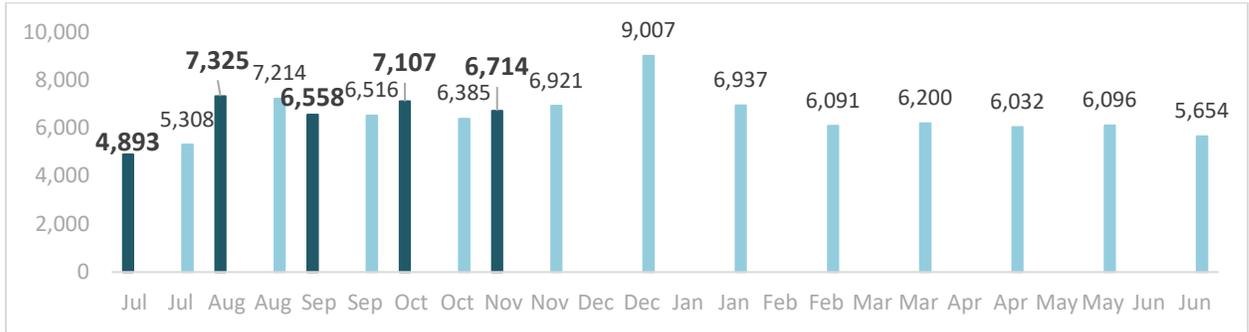
III.1.i Maintain and deepen current connections with faith communities while widening new ecumenical relationships. Hold the CEO accountable for metrics TBD in cooperation with staff.



Clients Served Agency Wide

■ Clients Served Agency Wide FY18

■ Clients Served Agency Wide FY17





BRIEFING

On Trends and Issues

January 25, 2018



Briefing On Trends and Issues January 25, 2018

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YEAR IN REVIEW BY SMARTBRIEF

This year kicked off with strong reactions to the presidential election on both sides of the aisle, including a significant upswing in donations to large, progressive organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union. However, smaller nonprofits didn't benefit as much from the uptick in post-election giving.

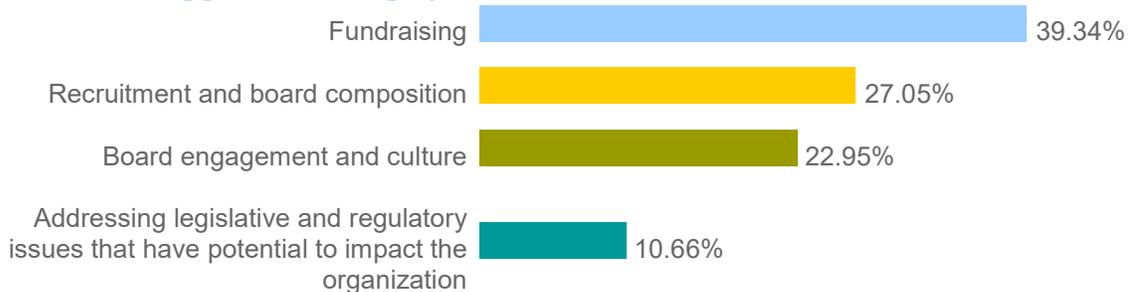
As the country questioned how the new political landscape would affect people of color, BoardSource's Leading with Intent study revealed a dissonance at many nonprofits between their values and their tangible work on board diversity. A diverse board and staff is key for nonprofits that want to tap donors from a wide range of backgrounds, fundraising experts say.

The nonprofit sector was also advised to change its perception of risk and move away from a caution-based model that revolves around avoiding it rather than embracing it. Nonprofit boards can benefit from thinking of risks as opportunities and engaging in risk leadership rather than just risk management.

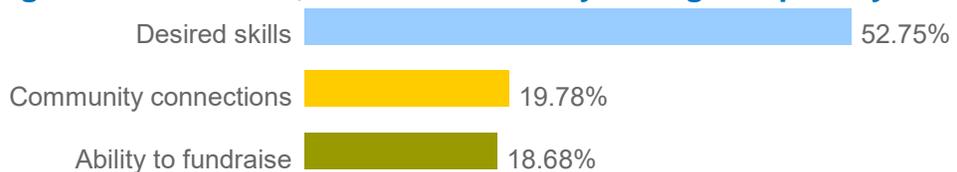
Meanwhile, millennials stepped up to the plate to support charitable causes, both financially and by volunteering. Nonprofit leaders were advised to reach millennials and other young people by sharing their organization's story through social media, visiting schools and explaining how young people can make a difference.

INDUSTRY OUTLOOK: BOARDSOURCE READER POLLS

What is the biggest challenge your board has faced in 2017?

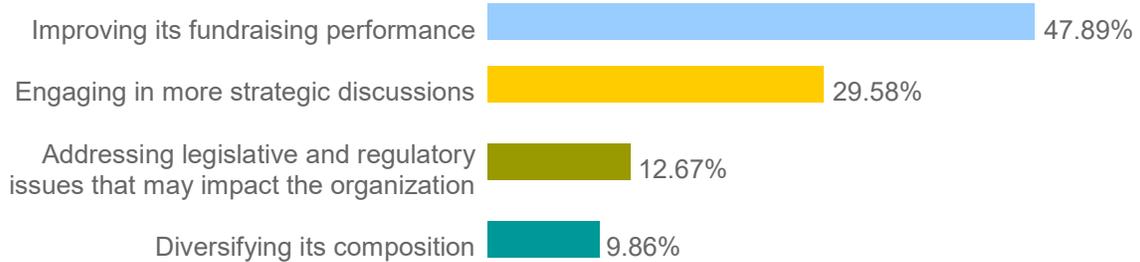


When recruiting a board member, which of these is your highest priority?



Demographic diversity 8.79%

In 2018, our board's highest priority will be:



EXPERT INSIGHTS

A look ahead at 2018 with President and CEO Anne Wallestad



Anne Wallestad has served as president and CEO of BoardSource since 2013, helping BoardSource expand its leadership voice and challenging board leaders to play a stronger role in advocacy and public policy.

Wallestad (BoardSource)

What were the biggest trends of the past year for nonprofit boards?

There's no question that over the past year we have been in a constant state of flux in terms of the political and policy environment in which nonprofits operate. Whether that's public funding for nonprofit programs, tax reform, policies related to nonprofit engagement in electoral politics, or policy changes that impact the people and communities that nonprofits serve, boards have needed to be attuned to the external environment and large-scale shifts that will affect the way their organizations operate in fundamental ways.

Additionally, our Leading with Intent research documented an unfortunate stagnancy as it relates to diversifying board composition. This is a longstanding and problematic trend, and one that is unlikely to change without significant shifts in board recruitment priorities. At BoardSource, we think that's a major issue and are committed to drawing attention to the importance of a diverse and inclusive board that can lead with authenticity on issues of equity. For us, this will be a major focus for our work in 2018 and beyond.

What are some of the biggest challenges expected in the coming year?

I see recent policy developments contributing to major challenges for individual nonprofits and the sector as a whole as we move into 2018, and a heightened need for boards to be

adaptable and flexible as they think about the best way to fulfill their organization's mission and purpose. Some organizations could face major reductions in funding -- whether as a result of changes in public funding or decreased individual giving as a result of tax reform -- and that could create real challenges in terms of supporting and sustaining their organization's work.

The organizations that successfully navigate through such circumstances will do so as a result of creative and innovative leadership at both the board and staff level, and a willingness to think openly about new ways of doing things, whether programmatically, structurally or otherwise.

SMARTEST QUOTE

Each year, thousands of BoardSource readers share the SmartQuote with colleagues, family and friends. This year's most-shared quote is below.



There are two ways of exerting one's strength: One is pushing down, the other is pulling up.

Booker T. Washington,
writer, educator and orator

Nonprofits Must Move Swiftly to Fight for Sound Public Policies

Tim Delaney and David L. Thompson
Officials of the National Council of Nonprofits



ISTOCK

Vermont is one of several states that tried to restrict charitable giving but failed to do so because of strong nonprofit advocacy.

The destructive tsunami the new federal tax law unleashes is about to pound the nation's nonprofits and foundations. The law that Congress passed and the president signed in the waning days of 2017 has created the most dangerous policy environment across the state, local, and federal levels that we've ever seen in the decades we've spent focusing on how governments and nonprofits interact.

That may sound like hyperbole. It is not.

Consider state policy making. In the next few months, states — operating without lead time or complete information — must react immediately to the complex federal tax law changes enacted just a couple weeks ago. States must now instantly assess the potential damage from the new law in time to make any required, yet disruptive, midyear changes to their budgets. At the same time, states must reopen their own tax codes to conform with the federal changes. Local governments will follow.

Every time tax laws are rewritten, it creates winners and losers. We anticipate attempts will be made to reconfigure state and local tax laws in ways that lead to new levies on tax-exempt entities, such as additional fees, payments in lieu of taxes on nonprofit-owned real estate, penalties on nonprofit salaries seen as overly high, and excise taxes on some endowments. What's more, as governments at all levels are forced to cut spending, more work will fall on nonprofits to help people hurt by the spending reductions. Expect nonprofits to have to seek more money from foundations to cover those costs — think of it as a new tax on philanthropy to subsidize decisions of politicians.

With the challenges of 2018 so clear, it's imperative that nonprofit and foundation professionals move quickly to advocate aggressively for smarter public policies at all governmental levels. Here are some of the key changes at stake.

Nonprofit Nonpartisanship vs. Politicking

Charitable, religious, and philanthropic organizations (with an assist from state charity regulators) have so far successfully blocked passage of five bills attempting to politicize their operations. Radical language in early versions of the tax bill and other proposed legislation would have weakened or eliminated the longstanding measure known as the Johnson Amendment (because it was proposed by then-Senator Lyndon Johnson) that protects charitable organizations, houses of worship, and foundations from political operatives pressuring those organizations to endorse or oppose candidates. It also insulates nonprofits from powerful donors exerting even more pressure by giving or threatening to withhold charitable contributions to organizations that endorse or oppose candidates the donors prefer.

But the threat remains very active — and likely will erupt again within the coming two weeks as Congress and the White House try to cobble together a spending bill for fiscal year 2018 before January 19 to avert a government shutdown.

President Trump, Vice President Pence, House leaders, Ralph Reed, Jerry Falwell Jr., televangelists, and the National Religious Broadcasters are among those vowing to "destroy" the Johnson Amendment — even though it has proven successful for more than 60 years. Why? We suspect it's lust for profit and power, because the language in the House-passed tax bill, according to Congress's nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, would have encouraged partisans to divert billions of dollars of political campaign contributions to houses of worship and charitable organizations — where it would be both anonymous and (for the first time) tax-deductible.

Particularly offensive about the well-funded advocacy campaign to corrupt charitable and philanthropic organizations by dragging them down into toxic partisan politicking is: It falsely disguises a campaign-financing proposal as a "religious speech" issue. Yet not a single religious denomination has stepped forward to endorse it — compared with more than 100 denominations and major religious institutions, 4,300 religious leaders, 5,600

charitable, religious, and philanthropic organizations, and many state law-enforcement officials who strongly oppose any changes in the prohibition on partisan politics.

The fight to shield charitable and philanthropic organizations from divisive partisan involvement isn't over, and it isn't just a federal issue; it's also a live threat in the states. This past year, legislators in Texas (enacted) and Michigan (pending) pushed to modify their laws to encourage or at least hinder enforcement of limits on partisan activities.

Tax Cuts = Revenue Cuts = Spending Cuts

The tax bill's deepening of the deficit by \$1.5 trillion already has been used as shallow "justification" for not fully funding the Children Health Insurance Program and cutting Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Expect things to get worse, as Bishop Frank Dewane of Florida, speaking for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about the federal tax bill, points out: "The final bill creates a large deficit that, as early as next year [2018], will be used as a basis to cut programs that help the poor and vulnerable toward stability."

States currently receive, on average, almost a third of their total revenues from the federal government. The reductions in revenue that will prompt the federal government to slash its spending will wreak havoc on many state and local budgets, further injuring the work of charitable organizations and increasing demands on foundations to fill the void.

What's the connection between nonprofits and the fiscal health of governments?

Several, but two stand out.

First, when federal, state, and local governments cut spending, they never cut human needs; in fact, human needs increase as individuals lose services on which they depend, generating increased demands on nonprofits (and foundations). Second, America's nonprofits earn almost a third of their entire revenue through government contracts and grants that pay for services in communities.

When governments cut spending, they reduce the resources needed to pay nonprofit contracts and grants; in turn, those nonprofits then must compete in the narrowing pool of contributions, thereby affecting all nonprofits, not just those with direct government agreements.

The states are in no condition to absorb revenue losses.

In 2017, 22 states suffered revenue shortfalls, making them unable to maintain services at existing levels, let alone with less federal funding. Here's a partial sampling of states now in fiscal duress: The ongoing Illinois budget crisis is legendary, while New Mexico and North Dakota are mired in at least their third straight year of spending cuts. Kentucky has a \$1 billion budget hole and is already cutting human services, and Iowa expects to make cuts of \$45 million to \$90 million by June 30. Oklahoma doesn't even have a budget for the fiscal year that started July 2017.

Any one change to federal tax law can knock state budgets out of alignment.

Montana, for instance, a state already in financial stress, calculates it will lose \$29 million in revenue this year because of federal tax changes that favor "pass-through" entities like small businesses, partnerships, and others that pass tax responsibilities onto owners, partners, and others.

How will the state raise replacement dollars? By taxing individuals, for-profit corporations, charitable organizations, or philanthropic assets? If you were a foundation or nonprofit, would you ignore this threat, go it alone, or join with other nonprofits in Montana to have more eyes and ears to learn what's happening — and a louder collective voice?

The new federal tax law will affect every state differently. While many states expect resulting revenue shortfalls, some may be spared. But as *The New York Times* reported this week, leaders in California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and elsewhere are considering promptly redesigning their tax codes with changes like shifting responsibility for all payroll taxes onto employers and allowing "residents to replace their state income tax payments with tax-deductible charitable contributions to their state governments."

Shrinking Charitable Gifts

As the American public just witnessed, neither facts nor logic mattered when the tax bill was before Congress.

State and local governments lost their objections to capping deductibility of state and local taxes, mortgage lenders lost their arguments about limiting the deductibility of mortgage interest, and homebuilders lost on both of those major changes. Similarly, Congress did not listen to charitable organizations and foundations about the dangerous consequences of tampering with incentives for giving.

Members of Congress may assert that they did not *directly* change the charitable-deduction provision in the tax code. That may be technically accurate, but it's certainly not the whole truth. By doubling the standard deduction and lowering tax rates, Congress will be depressing charitable giving by \$13 billion to \$20 billion annually and eliminating 220,000 to 264,000 nonprofit jobs, according to economists. When and where those shortfalls will hit are uncertain; it might take a full year or two to grasp the consequences.

Meanwhile, expect increased threats to state charitable-giving laws. In 2011, Hawaii capped its itemized deductions to fill a budget hole, and Michigan repealed charitable tax credits to provide big tax cuts for businesses. Charitable giving declined in each state by more than \$50 million annually. (Hawaii restored it in 2013 after seeing the fallout.) Since that time, at least seven additional states have tried (some more than once) to restrict charitable giving but have been defeated by strong nonprofit advocacy campaigns: Delaware, Kansas, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Vermont.

Health Care

The new tax law repeals the Affordable Care Act's requirement that every American must have health insurance or pay a penalty. The repeal will increase health-insurance premiums in some areas by 10 percent annually, according to the Congressional Budget Office. These changes matter to nonprofits of all kinds, not just health-care groups.

After all, nonprofits are employers that may incur significant new costs to provide health insurance for their workers. And the repeal will lead to new demands for services: Of the 13 million more people projected to have no health insurance, many may be forced to choose between paying for mandatory life-saving medication and paying other bills. Yet, for example, loss of car payments in an area with no public transit may mean that some people are no longer able to get to work, leading to loss of income, then loss of housing, food, and so on. Someone losing health insurance may suddenly have lots of nonmedical needs — and turn to more and more nonprofits for assistance.

An additional major concern is the ramifications to state budgets. As the federal government shifts more burdens for health-care costs onto the states, the resulting strains will create even more havoc.

Taxing Tax-Exempt Organizations

It sounds like an oxymoron: Congress decided to tax tax-exempt organizations to pay for additional tax cuts for for-profit corporations and others. In the tax bill, Congress:

- Imposes a 1.4 percent excise tax on larger university endowment returns. That means that elected officials are ignoring the fiduciary decisions of nonprofit trustees to impose their own political will.
- Increases unrelated business income taxes, often known as UBIT, by requiring that nonprofits calculate their taxes on each trade or business they run that is not closely allied to their mission. For example, a nonprofit hospital that earns revenue by running a laundry business now may have to pay UBIT. Under current law, nonprofits aggregate profits and losses of all entities.
- Imposes a new 21 percent excise tax on nonprofits that pay compensation of \$1 million or more to any of their five highest-paid employees.
- Taxes certain employee benefits that nonprofit employers provide, including gym memberships and commuter assistance.

Some of these approaches have been attempted before by some states.

For years, legislators in Massachusetts and Connecticut have sought to tax the investment returns or even the assets of college and university endowments. This past year, bills in Connecticut and Massachusetts would have denied tax-exempt status to nonprofit hospitals paying salaries that politicians regard as "high."

Legislation proposed in Montana would have deprived nonprofit hospitals of their property tax exemption for paying salaries of \$250,000 or more per year. A new bill just introduced in Vermont would cap salaries at nonprofits that do \$1 million or more in business with the state.

That's not all. For years nonprofits have been battling local governments searching for any new revenue sources. The efforts to impose new taxes, fees, and payments in lieu of taxes — (known as Pilot payments) — can pop up in normal or creative forms, such as redefining what qualifies as "tax-exempt" and assessing a "bed tax" on patients of nonprofit hospitals and students at nonprofit colleges.

Time for Action

The cascading spending cuts from the federal, state, and local levels, the pending frenzied rewriting of state and local tax laws, and other threatened policy changes demand our collective action.

Every nonprofit and foundation should hold a special board meeting immediately with senior staff members to review:

Operational matters. What does your organization need to do to comply with the new federal tax law (and upcoming state and local changes), such as adjusting employee withholding?

Policy. Identify the greatest risks your organization would face if particular state and local policies are changed, as well as any new opportunities. Figure out where to get timely, trustworthy policy information in your state and to lift your organization's voice collectively with others.

Advocacy. Because the markedly heightened threat level to missions makes it inescapable that organizations must engage in advocacy (directly or through other groups), make sure your organization understands its legal rights — and fiduciary obligation — to speak out in self-defense through legislative lobbying and engaging in other forms of advocacy.

There's no question big change is on the way, and it has the power to do tremendous damage to nonprofits and the people they serve. Indeed, a policy tsunami is racing toward us all. If we learn nothing else from 2017, it should be the urgent need for nonprofits and foundations to take active steps to advocate for smarter public policies.

Tim Delaney is chief executive and David L. Thompson vice president for public policy at the National Council of Nonprofits.

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From Government Funds to Income Diversity: A Map For The Quest

Is it time to expand your income horizons?

By Karen Eber Davis

Is your organization dependent on government funding? If so, it's likely that you're trying to move to a more diversified funding portfolio. And that's a good thing. The more diverse funding sources you have, the better.

But moving from government funding to diverse income is no walk in the park. While most primarily government-funded nonprofits hope to make the journey, few know how to minimize the hurdles they'll face. This article will help you gear up for this challenging but definitely do-able adventure.

Why Diversify?

Here are five reasons why it makes sense to become more diversified:

Government funds are shrinking (kedconsult.com/articles-resources/reason-for-hope-government-funding/).

You can be more innovative if you have funds that aren't limited by government restrictions.

With diverse income streams, you can intensify your community engagement so that when you face major cuts, your local friends rally round you and your work survives.

The more diverse your income, the more revenue you'll bring in for your organization.

If you have a variety of income streams, you won't need to panic if one source dries up.

What Makes the Journey So Challenging?

Why is the move from government funding to diversity so difficult? For one thing, the skills needed to gain government funding are entirely different from what's needed when searching out other income streams. Successful government funding helps you excel at working well with government personnel. It teaches political sensitivity and flexibility with changing electoral needs. You master precise guidelines, such as "Sign page four in blue ink." Expertise in government funding teaches this process to gain income:

1. Identify opportunities.
2. Complete paperwork.
3. Submit.
4. Wait on the outcome.
5. Do the program.
6. Repeat.

This process is unique unto itself. It won't help you be successful in generating the six other income streams:

- corporate funding
- in-kind gifts
- earned mission-related income
- donations from individuals
- foundation grants
- unrelated business income.

(To understand which of these streams will work best for you, take a look at previous articles in *Nonprofit World*; begin with "Add More Income Streams" on page 15.)

To be diverse, you need to create relationships that inspire donors and loyal customers. To gain these customers and donors, you must discover why they bring you money. You must know what they hope to achieve. You must ensure they fulfill those aspirations.

Besides shifting your focus and gaining skills, you'll find the journey to diversity challenging because it brings unpredictable returns. You'll experience more trial and error.

Success will look different – at least at first. Motivating 100 new donors to donate \$20 is a high-five accomplishment worthy of a celebration. Yet the resulting \$2,000 income stream is paltry compared to most government awards. (Part of your reorientation includes shifting from considering the value of the money to the value of the new donors over years – and repeating the process that inspired the new donations.)

Despite these and other challenges, most government-funded nonprofits seek – and need – greater income diversity. It's the way to achieve greater stability, sustainability, and self-determination.

Your Packing List for the Journey to Income Diversity

If you're determined to make this quest, what should you pack? Start with these mindsets.

“It's a challenging but definitely do-able adventure.”

MINDSETS: MORE THAN GOOD INTENTIONS

Like good hiking boots, these mindsets protect you from snakes, rocks, and the uneven terrain you may encounter in the territory you cross:

Appreciate the Feat

Ingenious nonprofits anticipate a long-term process. They look for realistic success. For most, it's reasonable to grow non-government income by 10% over three to five years. (Almost always growth to the *next* 10-15% is easier.) The time and the results depend on where you start. If you've dabbled successfully in income diversity for years, this will be too modest a goal. If you've done nothing, set your goals even lower, such as earning 1% over 18 months. In any case, gird yourself for a journey. Expect effort.

Why is this important? You seek income. As you work, you must believe that the results will come from your effort but at an unknown point. As you wait for results, you never stop working with prospects. That's very different from waiting for the pre-established deadline about your government proposal.

Resist Temptations

Sometime during your journey, maybe more than once, you'll encounter a humongous, glorious government opportunity. It will provide you with amazing revenue. Whether you pursue it or not, resist the temptation to quit your income diversity work. At some point, that new government stream will be exhausted. You'll face the diversity challenge again. Starting from a full stop is harder. Avoid having to repeat the first day of a long hike.

PRACTICAL ITEMS

Along with mindsets, what else do ingenious nonprofits pack? These practical items:

Money

You must invest money to gain new skills and support new relationships. You might need new personnel. You certainly need learning tools. Invest to keep your supporters' and workers' spirits high. Invest in help when you're stuck.

Obtaining the money you need might be one of your first challenges. Where might you find it? Begin by asking for help from community foundations, board members, and supporters who "get it."

Time

You need time today. You need time tomorrow – and every day, from here on out. You must invest time when you don't feel like it, when you don't know what to do, and even when other priorities scream for attention.

In my workshops (kedconsult.com/services/workshops), I challenge participants not to check social media more than

once per day. Instead I urge them to commit to investing the time (every day) to diversify their income.

You control at least some of your time. You can find it. Read the booklet "Time Management for Nonprofit Organizations" (kedconsult.com/store/booklets) for more.

Map-Making Tools

Compared to your new streams, government funding offers a much clearer roadmap. For the other streams, the maps are more sketchy. So you have to fill in the blanks and details. To do so, map out which income stream or streams to pursue. That's like your destination city. Map out a strategy to obtain those streams, like selecting the interstates you'll take. Plan how and when you'll make the trip, such as, "Starting next Monday, we'll drive from Miami to New York on I-95."

Use your map-making tools to break your magnificent quest into today's next steps. Base your map on your strengths and what you learn and experience. Your map shows you where to go and what to do. Your map allows you to track progress.

En route, your organization will change. Your life will be enriched. When you get to diversity, you'll be glad you made the trip. Through-hikers never regret the trek or the results. Commit to the journey. 



Karen Eber Davis, MBA, a professional advisor and consultant, is the founder of Karen Eber Davis Consulting (kedconsult.com) and author of 7 Nonprofit Income Streams: Open the Floodgates to Sustainability (CharityChannel Press). For a free excerpt from her book, e-mail Karen@kedconsult.com.

Add More Income Streams

In addition to the resources noted in this article, many previous *Nonprofit World* articles (NonprofitWorld.org) will help you decide which income streams to pursue, and how to do so. Begin with these:

Cracking The Diverse-Income Code (Vol. 35, No. 1)

Do You Want to Change the World? Will People Pay for That? (Vol. 34, No. 1)

The Risk of Not Risking (Vol. 35, No. 2)

Finding Value and Income Where You Least Expect It (Vol. 33, No. 1)

Create Extraordinary Impact: Fund Your Most Difficult Challenge (Vol. 32, No. 4)

Not a "Someday" Dream: The Steps to Sustainable Income (Vol. 34, No. 2)

Find Your Aces: How to Turn Your Handicaps into Opportunities (Vol. 35, No. 3)



Charitable Giving

Evaluating a Charity? Beware These Five Myths

By Kathryn Anne Stewart

In the past week, I've been asked for donations at least a dozen times. From my second cousin's field hockey team to aid for hurricane victims. I want to support them all, but I know I should evaluate each organization before handing over my hard-earned money.

To find out the right way to check out charities, I spoke to Stephanie Kalivas, an analyst at CharityWatch, a review site that grades charities on an A to F scale. She clued me in to a few persistent myths about charities:

MYTH #1: All charities use their funds wisely.

While many of the 1 million charities in the United States are responsible stewards of contributions, a number are not. Basic research should uncover if a charity is poorly run, but few people do the legwork to find out.

Kalivas recommends being particularly vigilant with charities tied to emotional causes, such as support for cancer patients, veterans, and police and firefighters. "There are some bad actors out there that are just taking advantage of people," she says.

MYTH #2: It's too complicated to research a charity.

Charity watchdogs sites – such as Kalivas' CharityWatch, as well as Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance – make it easier than ever to check a charity's standing.

If you're considering one that isn't reviewed online, it's possible to use the watchdogs' methodology to do your own research. "In general, we're using publicly available documents to do our work," Kalivas explains.

Start with the charity's own website. Is there information posted about its staff and board of directors? Are details shared about its past successes and future goals? Does a donor privacy policy exist?

Next, get your hands on the charity's IRS Form 990 and its audited financial statements. Oftentimes, these documents are posted to the charity's website. If not, they can be obtained at GuideStar.org or your state attorney general's website, or you could also ask the charity to share them. (If they won't, that's a red flag.)

Look for: how much of the organization's funding goes to program costs vs. administrative costs? (Programs should be 75

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For access to past editions, visit
FranklinProsperityReport.com
Check your e-mail inbox for this
month's password.

(Remember to use lowercase letters.)

percent or higher.) Is executive compensation reasonable, given the size and impact of the organization? (Compensation in the low-to-mid six figures is average.)

Kalivas says the "notes" section of the audited financial statements can be a treasure trove, too. "A lot of times those notes have interesting disclosures about what the charity is doing," she says.

Myth #3: All that matters is the percentage a charity spends on program costs.

Program spending is important, but charities have flexibility in how they report that number. For example, fundraising materials can be counted as program costs if they include an educational message. (Imagine a solicitation from a cancer charity that includes a tip about eating vegetables.)

"It's favorable for [charities] because it will inflate their program spending, and most people will focus in on that," Kalivas says. But CharityWatch assumes donors would not consider these legitimate program costs and adjusts them out.

For a charity you evaluate on your own, consult page 10, line 26, column B ("Joint Costs") of the charity's Form 990 to find out if it uses this methodology.

Myth #4: If you don't have time to research a charity, give a small amount.

Listen, I've been there. The person representing the charity is persistent, and sometimes you just want to end the encounter. My solution is never to donate over the phone or on the street. Instead, I ask to be contacted by mail. That way I can research the charity at my leisure.

"Never feel pressured to give on the spur of the moment without knowing anything about the charity," Kalivas says. "Your donation is meaningful. You should take some time."

Another reason not to donate over the phone: Many charities hire professional fundraisers to do telemarketing, according to Kalivas. These pros may keep as much as 90 percent of your donation before it reaches the charity!

Myth #5: It's best to donate to a charity whose name you recognize.

Most people prefer to give to well-known organizations. However, many charities have "sound-alike" names that are easily confused. Double-check the name to be sure you're giving to the charity you think you are.

Furthermore, name recognition isn't a guarantee of quality. It surprised me to learn that the American Cancer Society has a grade of "C" from CharityWatch and a two-star rating from Charity Navigator.

For every charity with a poor grade, Kalivas says there are plenty of well-run charities in the same category. "Just redirect your donation to one of those instead," she recommends. ■

REALITY CHECK

THE COSTS OF LIVING FOR MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES IN ARIZONA



Challenging Math for People Living with Disabling Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

WHAT "COUNTS" AS POVERTY?

According to the federal government, poverty is a single person earning \$12,060 or less per year. This equals \$1,005 per month. In Arizona,

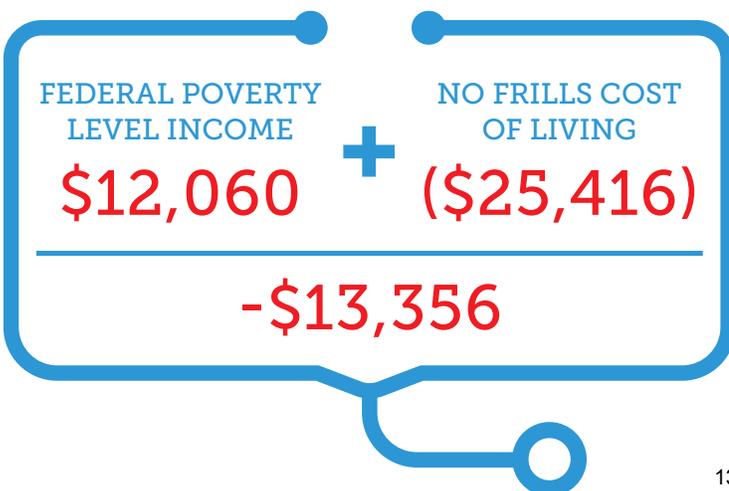
- 1,167,600 Arizonans live at or below the Federal Poverty Level
- 1,408,700 Arizonans live between 100-199% of the Federal Poverty Level



WHO QUALIFIES FOR MEDICAID?

- In Arizona, individuals with incomes above \$16,642 cannot qualify for Medicaid.
- Medicaid is the primary source of health care for people living with mental illness and a growing resource for people living with addiction.

REAL NUMBERS, HARD MATH



THE REAL COSTS OF LIVING IN PHOENIX, AZ

A no-frills budget, excluding health care costs, for an individual in Phoenix is \$25,416.

The cost of living in rural Arizona is \$51 less per month.

HOUSING 1 BR Apartment	\$614
FOOD/\$9 a day	\$271
TAXES/UTILITIES	\$356
TRANSPORTATION	\$450
OTHER: clothing, toiletries, etc	\$427

\$2,118



Many states, including Arizona, have increased cost-sharing requirements for Medicaid recipients. Cost sharing can include copayments, cost-sharing and monthly premiums.



For people with significant health care needs and who are living in poverty, cost-sharing can prevent access to effective and essential services.



After increasing cost-sharing in Oregon and Wisconsin, significant numbers of people left the health care program and resorted to the emergency room for care. Further, the administrative costs of the program may exceed the funds received from enrollees.



THE PRICE OF INCREASING COST-SHARING IN MEDICAID DOESN'T ADD UP

WHAT IS?

SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

More than 1 in 5 uninsured adults with an opioid addiction have a serious mental illness.

Nationally, uninsured adults are less likely to have received treatment for addiction than those covered by Medicaid, and drug addiction is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S.

In Arizona, over 323,000 people have a serious mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or depression. These conditions often impact a person's ability to communicate with others, take care of themselves, and understand the world around them.

By 2015, over 2 million people were addicted to prescription opioids and 591,000 people were addicted to heroin. In Arizona alone, 1,274 people lost their lives to drug overdoses, a 4 percent increase over the previous year.

WHAT IS?

Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) Limits

People diagnosed with a serious mental illness often qualify for Medicaid through the Social Security program. Individuals who qualify for SSDI Income for 2017 earn \$14,040 per year, and those who qualify for SSI income earn \$8,820 per year. SSDI and SSI are only provided to individuals who cannot work due to a medical condition or injury, and the federal government restricts these individuals from receiving any additional income. Individuals with addiction disorders cannot qualify for SSDI.



POVERTY & DISABILITY: BY THE NUMBERS (2017)

David Schlinkert, policy analyst
Alissa Heyer, research assistant

National Poverty

According to the 2016 U.S. Census, 44.3 million people in the United States (14 percent) were living in poverty, and 12.8 percent of the population reported having at least one disability. The median U.S. household income in 2016 was \$57,617. However, among households that included someone with a disability, the median income was more than 25 percent lower - \$41,600. The federal poverty guidelines have increased slightly between 2015 and 2017, but still remain low:

Household Size	2015	2016	2017
1-person household	\$11,770	\$11,880	\$12,060
2-people household	\$15,930	\$16,020	\$16,240
3-people household	\$20,090	\$20,160	\$20,160
4-people household	\$24,250	\$24,300	\$24,300

The following table indicates that workers with a disability are more likely to be living in poverty than individuals that do not have a disability.

Economic Characteristics of Workers with and without Disabilities Nationwide, 2016

	With Disability	No Disability	Difference
Employment Rate	21.1%	62.9%	41.8%
Not in Labor Force	75.6%	33.1%	42.5%
Annual Earnings	\$40,100	\$45,100	\$5,000
Poverty Rate	19.1%	14%	5.1%

Comparing working-age adults with and without disabilities, disparities are significant. As of 2015, 75.6 percent of individuals with a disability are disconnected from the labor force entirely. Of those who are in the labor force, only 21.1 percent are employed full-time. However, even when employed full-time, individuals with a disability make 10 percent less than individuals without a disability, a difference in annual earnings of \$5,000 in 2015.

Poverty in Arizona

In 2016, the poverty rate in Arizona was 2.4 percentage points higher than the national average; 16.4 percent of Arizona households were living in poverty. In addition, the median income among Arizona households, \$53,558, was \$4,059 below the national average, and more than one in five of families with children 18 and younger (21percent) were living in poverty.

A growing percentage, 13.1 percent, or 887,203 Arizonans, reported having at least one disability in 2016. One in ten (10.7 percent) are between the ages of 18-64. Comparing working age adults with and without disabilities at the state level, disparities remain significant. As of 2015, the majority (59.5 percent) of individuals with a disability are disconnected from the labor force entirely. Of those who are in the labor force, only 35.1 percent are employed full-time. However, even when employed full-time, individuals with a disability make 10 percent less than individuals without a disability, a difference in annual earnings of \$4,400 in Arizona in 2015.

Economic Characteristics of Workers with and without Disabilities in Arizona, 2016

	With Disability	No Disability	Difference
Employment Rate	35.1%	55.3%	20.2%
Not in Labor Force	59.5%	40.6%	18.9%
Annual Earnings	\$40,400	\$36,000	\$4,400
Poverty Rate	20.4%	16.4%	4%

Source: American Community Survey. 1-year estimates. 2016. S1701: Poverty Status in the past 12 months

Source: American Community Survey. 1-year estimates. 2016. DP02: Select Social Characteristics in the United States

Source: American Community Survey. 1-year estimates. 2016. DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2016. S1811: Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population by Disability Status.

Source: American Community Survey. 1-year estimates. 2016. S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States

December 2017 | Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona's premier think tank, was established in 1982. An Arizona State University resource, Morrison Institute utilizes nonpartisan research, analysis, polling and public dialogue to examine critical state and regional issues. Morrison Institute provides data- and evidence-based review to help improve the state and region's quality of life. Morrison Institute is part of the ASU College of Public Service and Community Solutions.

MorrisonInstitute.asu.edu

As we live longer, what will happen to quality of life?



Above: Phyllis Slacklie, 91, a La Loma resident, said that the best part about the program is getting to be there with great friends and let your worries go. (Photo and story by Alyssa Williams/Cronkite News) [Business News | 2 hours ago | Cronkite News](#)

Every time Catherine Baimonte visited her mother at an assisted living facility in Colorado, her mother's health worsened.

Baimonte, a retired Avondale teacher, remembers one of those visits. Her mother forgot how to shower.

Do you need help? Baimonte asked. She stepped in and out of the shower to help.

"Finally, we got out, dried off and I let her dress herself," Baimonte said.

Her mother, Kathleen Baimonte, made it halfway through, then stopped. She sat there.

What's wrong, mother?

I don't know what I'm doing, she answered.

Baimonte helped her finish dressing.

Another sister who dropped by later asked if their mother had showered. She said no.

Three months after Kathleen turned 99, after struggling with her memory that last few years, she died.

“When you get that old, I don’t care who you are, you have a mess of problems,” Baimonte said.

Health issues are taking the backseat now with various medical advances such as stem cell research, medicines and vaccines and bionic limbs prolonging life, according to a 2013 CNN article.

In a 2013 survey by Pew Research Center, those surveyed had mixed opinions on whether an extended life equated to a life of quality.

About half of respondents who think medical advances are good say life extension would be good for society, but about 25 percent of respondents felt advances were bad because they interfere with the natural cycle of life.

By 2050, people could live to 120 years old, Pew said. An intensive-care nurse said prolonging life often is a matter of advanced technology.

Hannah Lobato, a registered nurse at Abrazo Hospital West Campus, said she saw at least one new older person among her ICU patients each week.

“If we have to put a patient on life support, it most usually equates to a poor quality of life,” Lobato said. “The families are the ones who tend to make the decision to keep them on the machines, and it’s only because they don’t want to be the ones who killed grandma.”

Hospital inpatient charges, on average, can exceed \$6,200 per day, and costs to maintain someone in an ICU can reach up to \$10,000 per day. Skilled nursing facilities are reimbursed at a rate of approximately \$622 per day through Medicaid plans, according to America’s Debt Help Organization.

Medical technology often acts as a mask, Lobato said. Bedside monitors show a patient’s heart beat, blood pressure and other measures of a health condition in the moment. Doctors and nurses are striving to keep a patient alive.

“All those pretty numbers on the board, we’re making,” Lobato said. “If we take away that life support or medication then those numbers show their true health.”

Lobato said her grandmother, Marilyn Childs, suffers from dementia.

Five years before moving in with Lobato’s mother, Michele Kruser, Childs was not taking her prescribed medication. Her health deteriorated.

But Childs’ health improved after she moved in with her daughter.

“When she first came to live with me five years ago, she could barely take a few steps with a walker,” Kruser said. “We fixed that with daily activity. Within a year she was able to finally walk without the walker.”

Kruser said the transition was an adjustment, but the family worked toward the mother’s health every day.

Childs, who has passed all of her recent medical exams, is ready for whatever happens.

“I don’t take a lot of things real seriously,” said the 84-year-old Childs. “I make sure to keep a positive outlook on life, but what comes, comes.”

Kruser is researching adult day care facilities that will offer games, arts and crafts, conversation and skills, such as cooking, to stimulate her mother’s brain and keep her active.

Research has shown physical, social and mental activities help with the longevity of life.

Retirement and assisted living centers like La Loma Village in Litchfield Park are going beyond stereotypical activities like bingo and Parcheesi to offer classes on elder law, history and the fine arts.

“We try to make sure everyone can maintain the skills they came with, learn new skills and find real meaning and purpose,” said Kari Curry, life enrichment director at La Loma. “A life without purpose is not a life well lived. Purpose contributes to our longevity.”

In a recent class, Marilyn Pyle, an 83-year-old La Loma resident, painted a scenery from a photo she took which included trees and mountains.

“Art is a great outlet. We have time to come and paint what inspires us, spend time with our friends,” Pyle said. “It’s also a great brain stimulant and at our age, that’s important.”

Catherine Baimonte said her mother lived for nearly a century because of family.

Baimonte wrote to her mother every week and called every Sunday. Her sister, Betty, came by daily to take their mother out.

“You have to become the stimulator. Start a conversation. Tell stories. Initiate outings,” she said.

Navigating caregiving: community supports and resources for self-care

- By Adina Wingate Special to the Arizona Daily Star



Courtesy PCOA

While taking care of a family member or close friend is one of the greatest gifts a person can give, it often results in high levels of stress and loss of self for the caregiver. One in every five people in the United States is currently a caregiver, and the majority are women.

Did you know?

- That caregivers report having health problems almost twice as often as non-caregivers?
- That half of those caregivers spend 10 percent of their income on caregiving expenses?
- That up to 70 percent of caregivers suffer from depression or isolation or both.
- That many caregivers are unaware of the educational resources that exist to help support them.

Family caregiving specialists at Pima Council on Aging say caregiving is today's issue just as child care was in the 1980s. Employers also need to recognize and accommodate the reality that so many workers today have significant caregiving responsibilities at home.

An important aspect of becoming a caregiver is to remember to give yourself support, and be open to social interactions through support groups. PCOA Help Line staff are information specialists who will listen and share local resource materials for and about self-care and for temporary relief, or respite care. It's a chance to refresh the relationships between you and the person receiving care. When you take care of yourself, you are better able to help the person needing your love and support.

Next month, my siblings and I will be deep in reflection as we remember the passing of our 98 - year-old father last January, after nearly 14 years of caregiving shouldered by my brother and his wife who offered and took the primary responsibility of caregiving. They took it on fearlessly with loving kindness, patience, tenacity and good humor. My sister took the lead as long-

distance caregiver par excellence. I settled into the role of shorter-distance caregiver who regularly offered to “drive over” to the high desert of New Mexico for regular visits with our Dad, and often just to give them a break.

Our journey is like so many other stories about the dynamics of wading into family caregiving. Along the way, each of us found meaningful ways to appreciate the smallest tasks. Each of the adult children found a specific way to contribute to shouldering the tasks while also finding ways to take care of ourselves.

No small measure of the journey is literally about learning how to complete fundamental caregiver tasks that many of us may take for granted. A host of activities of daily living, done correctly, are critical, repeated tasks, such as transfer from chair to bed, bathing, changing clothing and more.

The demands of caring for a loved one can be stressful, and it is difficult to provide care when you are unsure of what you are doing. That’s why Pima Council on Aging, in partnership with Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, offers a one-day training of two sessions specifically for unpaid family caregivers.

The training workshops are available every month. The training is free and the topics covered in the two sessions are designed for those who are caring for someone age 60 or older or someone who has Alzheimer’s or a related dementia of any age.

To register and get details about the January Family Caregiver Training on Wednesday, Jan 10, contact Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest at (520) 514-7642 (ext. 201) or e-mail jbrowne@lss-sw.org

Another aspect of the journey is taking care of yourself and relating to other family caregivers who join a PCOA Caregiver Support Group.

Family Caregiver Support Groups

Pima Council on Aging’s Family Caregiver Support Groups are open to anyone providing care for a person age 60 and older, or for someone with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia at any age. These groups are available at several locations throughout Pima County.

- There is no charge to attend.
- Call 609-1271 for pre-registration for a caregiver who is attending a group for the first time.

If you are a family caregiver, there is no charge to attend these workshops.

PCOA Family Caregiver Support Group locations throughout Pima County are online at www.pcoa.org/family-caregivers/caregiver-support-groups.

Family Caregiver Training Free Workshops

- The January Family Caregiver Training Workshop is at Armory Park Center, MPR Room, at 222 S. Fifth Avenue. The one-day training is provided in two, back-to-back sessions: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1-4 p.m., Wednesday, Jan 10. Family Caregiver Training schedules are online at PCOA at www.pcoa.org/family-caregivers/caregiver-training.

The Family Caregiver Training is provided in two sessions:

Workshop I

- Basic Infection Control and Prevention
- Stress Management
- Home Environment Safety
- Psychological and Emotional Conditions
- Dementia Specific Care
- Grief and End of Life Issues
- Activity Planning
- Transfers and Positioning
- Personal Care
- Communication Skills
- Nutrition and Food Preparation
- Fall Prevention
- Communication Techniques
- Alzheimer's and Related Dementias
- Communication Techniques
- Alzheimer's and Related Dementias

Workshop II – Hands-on Training

- Basic Infection Control and Prevention
- Proper Body Mechanics
- Evacuation and Fire Safety
- Nutrition and Assisting with Eating and Redirecting
- Transferring and Walking
- Use of Gait Belt
- Transferring out of Bed and in a Wheelchair
- Repositioning in Bed and in a Wheelchair
- Proper Bed Bath Techniques
- Catheter Bag Care
- Assisting, Positioning and Disposal of a Bed Pan
- Hygiene Care.

From: [Connie Phillips](#)
To: [Fran Prisco](#)
Subject: FW: The Octogenarians Who Love Amazon's Alexa - MIT Technology Review
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2018 10:46:26 AM
Attachments: [FINAL-DRAFT-Amazon-Alexa-Analysis-Report.pdf](#)

From: Robert Duea [<mailto:rduea@cox.net>]
Sent: Thursday, January 4, 2018 10:25 AM
To: David and Jane Duea; Joanne Thomson; Connie Phillips; Richard Andersen; Stephen Beyer
Subject: The Octogenarians Who Love Amazon's Alexa - MIT Technology Review

Good Morning, I got the following from Joanne Miner regarding the use of Amazon's Alexa with retirees. The study in the attachment below was exhaustive and done by Front Porch, a well known and highly respected services to elderly (mostly residential) in California. It is over 50 pages but it has a concise Executive Summary. They are also part of the LSA (Lutheran Services in America) system. The article below is from the MIT Technology publication. I think it could be a great addition to services provided by a congregation for its retirees, especially to provide help in set up and learning how to use the capabilities. We are only one step away from hooking this up to the urgent call buttons. It may already be available as a smart phone app? Cool stuff!

<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/608047/the-octogenarians-who-love-amazons-alexa/>

The Octogenarians Who Love Amazon's Alexa

A community of San Diego retirees is using the personal-assistant gadget to listen to audiobooks, keep current with family news, and control home appliances.

[Elizabeth Woyke](#)

- jack sachs

When Lois Seed wakes up in the morning, one of the first things she says is “Alexa, what is the weather?” Seed, who is 89 and has low vision because of macular degeneration, finds it convenient to get weather information by speaking to the

Alexa voice-activated assistant on her Amazon Echo. She also asks her Echo to tell her the time and to play classical music from her former hometown radio station.

“Life is more enjoyable [with Alexa],” she says, proving that the recent [Saturday Night Live spoof](#) about Alexa and seniors couldn’t be further from the truth.

Seed and about 50 other residents at the [Carlsbad by the Sea retirement community](#) near San Diego have been testing the personal-assistant technology inside their homes since late February. [Front Porch](#), the nonprofit organization that runs the community, devised the pilot program after residents expressed interest in Alexa and asked to try it.

Some older adults have been using Alexa on their own to [alleviate loneliness](#) and [set medication reminders](#), but Front Porch appears to be the first retirement community to study the technology’s impact in depth. And it wants its residents’ experiences to help inform how future versions of Alexa might better serve the elderly. The group could represent a sizeable new market for Amazon. More than one million Americans reside in assisted-living facilities today, and that number is expected to double by 2030.

Front Porch began by distributing Alexa devices to a small focus group of residents and now hosts biweekly, in-person training workshops, conducts user interviews and in-home visits, and writes research reports. It runs the project through the [Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#), a technology outreach program that is also testing home robots and virtual reality as ways to meet the needs of older adults. The goal is to explore ways to integrate Alexa-enabled devices quickly into its other retirement communities, which have more than 2,000 residents across California.

The majority of the people in the Alexa focus group are in their late 80s. Some use walkers to get around, and some have visual and/or hearing impairments. Most use their Echoes in simple ways: to set alarms, stream music, listen to audiobooks, and check the news, sports scores, time, and weather. Jim Bates, a 79-year-old who has hand tremors, finds it far faster and easier to search the Web via Alexa than to type queries on

his laptop or iPhone.

Front Porch is also teaching residents how to use Alexa to communicate with family and friends. They can make calls via voice commands using Amazon's Alexa-to-Alexa calling service, which is compatible with other Echo devices and Amazon's Alexa smartphone app. If they want to send and receive text messages, they can use an Alexa "skill," or app, called [Marvee](#) that translates voice snippets into text and delivers them to pre-specified contacts. For example, a resident trying to reach her grandson can say, "Alexa, ask Marvee to have Eric call me," and the app will send Eric a text or e-mail that says, "Call Grandma when you get a chance." Family members can also submit their own messages to Marvee, which can be retrieved just by saying, "Alexa, ask Marvee for family news."

In a few weeks, Front Porch will connect the Carlsbad residents' Echoes to smart plugs and thermostats so they can adjust their lights and room temperature via Alexa. If all goes well after that two-month test, Front Porch will explore possible deployments of Alexa devices to its other communities.

There have been frustrations, some surrounding the need to learn how to phrase requests in a way Alexa will understand. So far, the biggest hurdle relates to Alexa's voice. The software speaks with deep bass tones that can sound garbled to people who have hearing impairments. To help those users, Front Porch asked Amazon to release an equalizer feature that would let people adjust Alexa's treble, midrange, and bass range levels. Amazon is reviewing the request, says Davis Park, the Front Porch executive leading the Alexa research project.

From Our Advertisers

[Elizabeth Woyke](#) Senior Editor, Business

What is the future of work when AI, automation, and on-demand services are altering how we define what a job is and who qualifies as an employee? As the senior editor for business, I'm focused on writing stories that explore this important question.... More

How Trump is building a bureaucratic wall to keep out immigrants

President Donald Trump's vision of a "big, beautiful" wall along the Mexican border may never be realized, and almost certainly not as a 2,000-mile physical structure spanning sea to sea.

But in a systematic and less visible way, his administration is following a blueprint to reduce the number of foreigners living in the United States — those who are undocumented and those here legally— and overhaul the U.S. immigration system for generations to come.

Across agencies and programs, federal officials are wielding executive authority to assemble a bureaucratic wall that could be more effective than any concrete and metal one. While some actions have drawn widespread attention, others have been put in place more quietly.

The administration has moved to slash the number of refugees, accelerate deportations and terminate the provisional residency of more than a million people, among other measures. On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security said nearly 60,000 Haitians allowed to stay in the United States after a devastating 2010 earthquake have until July 2019 to leave or obtain another form of legal status.

"He's building a virtual wall by his actions and his rhetoric," said Kevin Appleby, migration policy director for the Center for Migration Studies, a nonprofit think tank.

Trump administration officials say they are simply upholding laws their predecessors did not and preserving American jobs. Previous Republican and Democratic administrations were too soft on enforcement, they say, and too rosy in their view of immigration as an unambiguously positive force.

"For decades, the American people have been begging and pleading with our elected officials for an immigration system that's lawful and serves the national interest," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in Austin last month. "Now we have a president who supports that."

Bob Dane, executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which has pushed for many of the Trump administration's main goals on immigration, said the president has "really scaled back this expansive view of immigration that occurred under the Obama administration."

The new restrictions could significantly reduce the number of foreign-born workers in the U.S. labor force, but demographic experts say there is little chance they will alter the country's broader racial and ethnic transformation, which Trump's critics say is his goal. Census projections show the United States will no longer have a single racial or ethnic majority by mid-century, according to the Pew Research Center.

Still, by erecting tougher, taller administrative hurdles for foreigners seeking to move to the United States or remain in the country after arriving illegally, the White House is attempting to shift the country back toward the tighter controls on immigration in place before the 1960s.



"Within the administration there are a number of key players who are just looking for every opportunity, every program, every administrative or regulatory leeway they have to restrict entry into the United States," said Linda Hartke, president and chief executive of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, which resettles refugees.

Even as they fight court orders seeking to halt parts of Trump's immigration agenda, Sessions, White House senior adviser Stephen Miller and other key players are finding ways to shrink the immigration system. Miller was an aide to Sessions before both men joined the administration; in less than a year, their immigration policy prescriptions have moved from the realm of think-tank wish lists to White House executive orders.

In October, the White House — in a plan led by Miller— said it had conducted a "bottom-up review of all immigration policies" and found "dangerous loopholes, outdated laws, and easily exploited vulnerabilities in our immigration system— current policies that are harming our country and our communities."

Trump has endorsed GOP legislation to cut annual, legal immigration by half, reducing the number of green cards issued annually from about 1 million to 500,000. More weight would be given to immigrants with job skills, as opposed to those with extended family in the United States.

The president cut the number of refugees the United States is willing to accept annually from 110,000 to 45,000, the lowest level since 1980, and ordered the implementation of a time-consuming "extreme vetting" system that could mean the number of refugees cleared each year is much lower. In October, 1,242 refugees arrived in the United States, down from 9,945 in October 2016.

Trump also eliminated a smaller program specifically for refugees fleeing violence in Central America. The Pentagon, citing concerns about vetting, suspended a recruitment program offering skilled foreigners a fast track to citizenship if they serve in uniform.

Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the Migration Policy Institute at the New York University School of Law, said nearly 350,000 of the newcomers who arrive legally to the United States each year are the spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Since barring those arrivals is not under consideration, Chishti said, the government would have to eliminate or sharply restrict almost all other avenues to reduce the annual number of immigrants to 500,000.

In addition to this week's decision on Haitians, the government earlier this month declined to renew Temporary Protected Status, a form of provisional residency, for about 2,500 Nicaraguans. The State Department says conditions in Central America and Haiti that had been used to justify the protection for as long as two decades no longer necessitate a reprieve. Decisions on more than 250,000 Hondurans and Salvadorans with the provisional residency permits are pending.

Trump is also ending Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, the Obama administration program that granted work permits to 690,000 young immigrants brought here as children. Trump's administration is expanding immigration courts and detention centers and has ratcheted up deportations from the interior of the United States, where millions of undocumented immigrants with U.S.-born children and no serious criminal records held little fear of expulsion under President Barack Obama.

Arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement are up more than 40 percent this year, and the agency wants to more than double its staff by 2023, according to a federal contracting notice published this month. ICE is calling for a major increase in workplace raids and has signed more than two dozen agreements with state and local governments that want to help arrest and detain undocumented residents.

"If you're in this country illegally and you committed a crime by entering this country, you should be uncomfortable," Thomas Homan, the top official at ICE, told lawmakers this year. "You should look over your shoulder. And you need to be worried."

The president and his aides have pressed forward despite an outcry from advocates and Democratic lawmakers, who in states such as California and Illinois have instructed police and public officials to shun cooperation with ICE. The Trump administration has threatened to strip such "sanctuary" jurisdictions of federal funding in an escalating legal standoff.



Trump's tough talk alone appears to be one of the administration's best bulwarks: Illegal crossings along the border with Mexico have plunged to their lowest level in 45 years, and U.S. agents are catching a far greater share of those attempting to sneak in. Applications for H-1B skilled visas and new foreign-student enrollment have also declined.

William Frey, a demographer at the Brookings Institution, said that until now U.S. immigration rates have largely spared the country from the challenges facing advanced industrial nations such as Japan and Germany that can't replace aging workers fast enough. By slashing immigration, Frey said, the country could end up with labor shortages and other workforce issues.

But although some of Trump's most fervent supporters see curbing immigration as a way to turn back the United States' rapid racial and ethnic transformation, Frey said it is an unrealistic goal. By 2020, census projections show minorities will account for more than half of the under-18 U.S. population, because of higher birthrates in nonwhite populations. And by 2026, the number of whites is projected to begin declining in absolute numbers, he said, as deaths exceed births.

"You can slow the rate of Latino and Asian immigration, but it won't make the population whiter," Frey said. "It will just become less white at a slower pace."

Trump continues to insist his administration will build a border wall, despite exorbitant cost projections and senior DHS officials saying a 2,000-mile structure is impractical.

His supporters say they admire the president for plowing ahead in his overhaul efforts and see a historic, generational shift underway.

"There is more than one way to get to the goal," Dane said. "Legislative solutions are all great, but clearly the administration has done things behind the scenes. ... The results have been dramatic."



Guardianship Can Be a Positive Life Changer for Children

November 2017



Guardianship Can Be a Positive Life Changer for Children

While living in group homes, Andy experienced failing grades, poor school attendance and little to no community involvement. When placed in guardianship with his "aunt" at age 16, he began earning high school credits for the first time, attends school daily and is experiencing success in the home, school and community. His "aunt" remains committed to Andy and his brother maintaining contact with their birth family, while ensuring their safety and well-being.

After nearly two decades of experience with permanent guardianship in Arizona, it is time to update laws and practices to safeguard children and improve their stability and security.

Abused and neglected children can connect to a permanent and loving family through "Permanent Guardianship." This is another option in addition to adoption or reunification that allows children to live with people they know and trust, avoid moving from one foster care placement to another, and maintain a safe connection with their birth family and culture.

Permanent guardianship is established when the court appoints an adult who is given legal responsibility and assumes the rights of care, custody, and supervision of a child under the age of 18 outside of the foster care system.

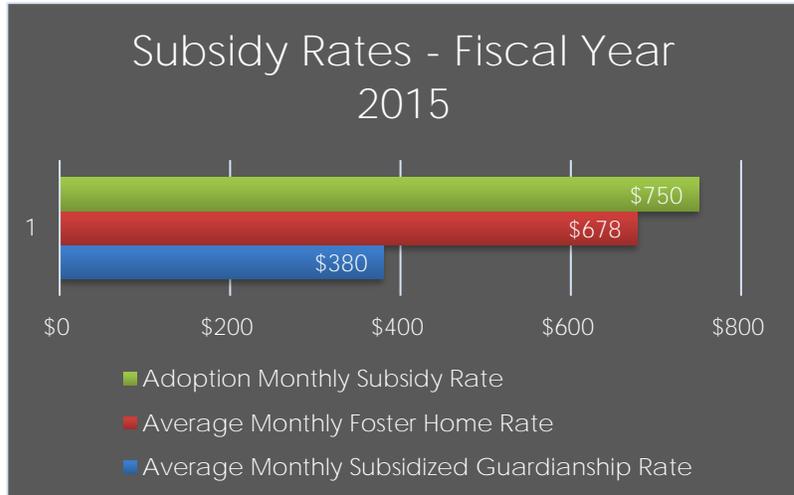
History of Permanent Guardianship in Arizona: In 1999, Arizona passed a law to allow for permanent guardianship (A.R.S. §8-871) under certain conditions for a child in foster care. It requires the juvenile court to order a report within one year to assess the safety and condition of the child and determine if there are any service needs. A permanent guardianship subsidy was also established in A.R.S. §8-814 that allows the Department of Child Safety (DCS) to

provide a subsidy to an applicant **after** the guardian applicant has applied for all other state and federal benefits.

Recent State Legislative Action in Permanent Guardianship: In 2017, the Arizona legislature passed SB 1360 to allow the juvenile court to establish a permanent guardianship for a child who is the subject of a **pending** dependency petition filed by DCS. Prior to this change in state law, family reunification and adoption had to be ruled out as permanency options in order for permanent guardianship to be considered a case plan option. Effective August 9, 2017, A.R.S. §8-871 allows the court to waive consideration of adoption before a guardianship can be considered.

The Supports for Permanent Guardianship Have Eroded: When the permanent guardianship law was passed in 1999, the monthly stipend amount for permanent guardianship was similar to the adoption subsidy maintenance payment. Today, children in a permanent guardianship have less access to benefits than when the program was established. This includes:

(1) Children in a permanent guardianship status are no longer eligible for the TANF child-only benefit if their guardian family does not qualify based on the total family income; (2) For AHCCCS health coverage, guardians must apply themselves and are often not accurately informed about eligibility; and (3) Permanent guardianship subsidies are no longer similar, but are far lower, than the adoption subsidy maintenance payment.



Optional Financial Supports Available

In 2008, Congress passed the Fostering Connections Act (P.L. 110-351) that offers federal financial assistance to states that opt in to the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. Arizona has not opted in to this entitlement program.

Practice Issues: Problems and Concerns: Permanent guardianship can offer a positive alternative when family reunification is not in the best interests of the child. Today, there are a range of circumstances that are weakening the guardianship option and diminishing children's security.

- There is a substantial need for clearer policies, consistent practices and easier processes for permanent guardianship at all levels, including at DCS, DES, AHCCCS, and the juvenile courts.
- There are fiscal disincentives for a family to choose guardianship if they are a licensed foster home and doing so may impact the ability of the caregiver to adequately provide for the child.
- DCS does not provide specific staff support to assist in stabilizing placements by answering questions or addressing concerns that may arise after a permanent guardianship is in place as DCS does for those receiving adoption subsidy.
- There is no comprehensive and consistent information available on guardianship that clearly explains the role, responsibilities and resources available to permanent guardians.
- Some guardians are confused about AHCCCS health insurance eligibility; in part because DCS staff and Department of Economic Security (DES) staff who determine eligibility for AHCCCS have provided inconsistent and sometimes erroneous information to guardians.

- Currently, subsidized guardianship and adoption subsidy work very differently from one another. Guardians have to apply for their guardianship subsidy and for AHCCCS **after** the guardianship is already approved by the court; whereas for adoption subsidy, the adoptive parent applies for subsidy **prior** to the court approval of the adoption,

2,737
 CHILDREN WERE LIVING WITH
 1,657 PERMANENT GUARDIAN
 FAMILIES IN MAY 2017

682
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN
 WHO HAVE LEFT FOSTER CARE FOR
 PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP
 ANNUALLY FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS

10,236 CHILDREN HAVE LEFT FOSTER
 CARE FOR PERMANENT
 GUARDIANSHIP FROM FEDERAL
 FISCAL YEAR 2002 THROUGH
 2016

**BY THE
 NUMBERS**

and DCS staff do the work to assure AHCCCS enrollment for the adopted child. This creates a gap in support for permanent guardianship families that can hurt the children in their care.

- State law restricts the ability of guardians to seek the life-time commitment to a child through adoption and receive an adoption subsidy. Currently A.R.S. §8-143 limits eligibility for adoption subsidy to *“Foster parents who are interested in adopting a child in their home or any other persons interested in adopting a child under public or private agency care.”* Children in a permanent guardianship are no longer in foster care or under public or private agency care.
- A thorough permanent guardianship assessment is not consistently completed for children in foster care to determine the bond between the child and the prospective guardian and the benefits and risks for each permanency path.
- Youth who move from foster care to permanent guardianship just before they turn 18 lose the ability to have AHCCCS (Medicaid) coverage until age 26 and lose eligibility for the financial supports of the state’s Independent Living Subsidy Program up to age 21. These benefits are important to young adults without permanent family connections and should be weighed against the benefits of establishing a permanent guardianship – especially in cases when the youth is close to turning 18 and when the connection with the guardian is not strong and may not create a permanent family.
- Guardians do not have access to DCS case management services on an as needed basis that could help to stabilize permanent guardianship placements and prevent possible disruptions.

DCS Staff and DES Eligibility Staff
 Need to Be Better Informed of
 AHCCCS Eligibility for Children
 Under a Guardianship

No one was able to correctly guide Mrs. Rivera through AHCCCS eligibility for Antonia aged 15 and Daniel aged 17, who were denied AHCCCS health benefits twice. Mrs. Rivera shared that she recently applied for a loan in order to pay out of pocket for the children’s medical and dental expenses.



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

- Amend A.R.S. §8-814 to permit prospective guardians to apply to DCS and get approval or disapproval for a guardianship subsidy **before** the court decision to approve a permanent guardianship.
- Automate AHCCCS eligibility and enrollment for children moving to permanent guardianship as is currently in place for those children placed by DCS for adoption.
- Amend A.R.S. §8-143 to allow guardians to adopt children in their care and receive an adoption subsidy.
- Pass a state FY 2019 budget that increases the permanent guardianship subsidy to strengthen family stability.
- Explore through DCS and the Governor's Office the programmatic as well as financial benefits of accepting the Title IV-E Guardian Assistance Program (GAP) option.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS

- Create or designate DCS staff positions to support permanent guardians when questions or concerns arise to help stabilize families.
- Pass state legislation to extend financial supports to age 21 for adoption and guardianship in recognition of child development science and the challenges of successful transitions to adulthood.
- Include in DCS case decision-making processes a thorough assessment of the pros and cons of each permanency option regarding stability and quality of relationship, the programmatic and financial supports available, and the child's future plans and goals.
- Develop and distribute clear and comprehensive information about the different permanency options including adoption and guardianship as well as independent living for potential adoptive parents and guardians, youth in foster care, DCS staff, judicial officers, attorneys, CASAs, providers, and other stakeholders.



All Parties Need to Be Involved in Guardianship Decision-Making and Be Connected to the Available Resources

The Taylors signed guardianship documents for Jackie, their 13 year old niece, without the understanding of what guardianship was or how it worked; they did not understand that they could not be licensed as foster parents if they were guardians of the child. The DCS case manager stated to the family that she needed to get the family off of her caseload. The Taylors never applied and did not receive guardianship subsidy. They did not know they could apply for AHCCCS. They did not understand how to get any help for Jackie.



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Our View: Prevention is the best fix for Arizona's foster care system

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If we want to fix Arizona's broken child-welfare system once and for all, we must rethink how we view child abuse and neglect.

Editorial: Arizona has programs like Healthy Families that are proven to prevent child neglect and abuse. But funding was slashed and never restored.



(Photo: David Wallace/The Republic)

Prevention is the most child-friendly approach to child welfare because children do best in their own homes.

But evidence suggests the default setting for Arizona's child welfare agency has been to remove children – even if the family got involved with the system because of neglect, not abuse.

That's turning around. There is a lot of talk about prevention and intervention.

But it will take more than talk.

Prevention needs sustained funding

Gov. Doug Ducey and the Legislature need to make a strong commitment to fund family support measures.

The Arizona Department of Child Safety recognizes the importance of prevention and intervention to help families. DCS established the Office of Prevention in 2016 and named Sue Smith as prevention administrator.

The office runs a variety programs, including substance abuse treatment, in-home visitation, regional child abuse prevention councils and a program designed to keep substance exposed newborns with their mothers when possible.

But these programs don't serve everyone who could benefit. DCS Director Greg McKay called for expanding successful efforts that were not being used statewide.

“For programs that are working, I don't think there is ever enough funding,” says Smith.

In addition to making a commitment to funding prevention, Arizona needs to take a broader view of what it means.

What we mean by 'prevention'

“We've already failed if a call has gone to DCS,” says Marcia Stanton, coordinator of the Strong Families program at Phoenix Children's Hospital Injury Prevention Center.

She says prevention is about a living wage, affordable child care and available health care. It's about a good public education system that prepares people for good-paying jobs, and an economy that produces those jobs.

It's about helping families before a crisis.

When a child has to be removed from a home, the trauma of whatever happened at home is compounded. Foster care means the stress of losing everything familiar – home, family, siblings.

For children in the system, stress can turn toxic if there is no relief, no trusted adult to provide an anchor.

The impact on a child's brain can have life-long negative consequences, according to the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy.

When prevention gets short-changed

The Arizona Adverse Childhood Experiences Coalition, which Stanton leads, is working to raise awareness of the impact of these negative early childhood experiences, and to promote prevention that helps families.

There are ways to overcome these adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs.

But preventing them is better – and it can be done.

Arizona has evidence of what happens when prevention gets short-changed.

Programs that help at-risk families were cut deeply during the recession.

What followed was a spike in neglect cases beginning in 2009, according to an independent review of the DCS prepared by researchers at the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall.

The number of children in foster care in Arizona reached a record 18,906 in March 2016. It's been declining, but remains at more than 16,000.

The programs that were cut served working poor families. They included child care subsidies, as well as housing assistance, substance-abuse treatment and job training.

The result: More kids in foster care

Recession-era state cuts to such programs resulted in a 40 percent increase in the number of children who needed to be placed in foster care since 2009 and these children are staying in foster care longer because their parents are not provided with the services they need," according to the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

That statement from the academy is quoted in a 2015 class action lawsuit filed on behalf of foster children in Arizona by the Center for Law in the Public Interest, Coppersmith Brockelman, PLC and Children's Rights Inc. The case has not yet gone to trial.

Cuts to child care subsidies were particularly dramatic.

According to the Chapin Hall report, the number of families receiving subsidies to place children in safe care while mom or dad worked fell from 25,077 in 2009 to 12,634 in 2014 – the year DCS was created to replace the state's previous child welfare system, which was so underfunded that it collapsed under the weight of uninvestigated cases.

Arizona's lack of commitment to prevention also can be seen in the state's treatment of a proactive, pro-family program that has been operating in Arizona since 1991.

Healthy Families works. We have proof

Healthy Families reaches out to expectant and new parents who have risk factors, such as poverty, substance abuse or mental health issues. Parents get home visits, education on child development and referrals for needed services.

"Outcomes are phenomenal," says DCS's Smith.

Healthy Families is based on a proven national model and has been extensively evaluated in Arizona.

Craig LeCroy, professor of the Arizona State University school of social work in Tucson, has been evaluating Healthy Families in Arizona through LeCroy & Milligan Associates in Tucson.

He says researchers “have found a difference” in parenting behavior, such as fewer incidents of harsh or violent discipline, and higher use of protective measures, such as car seats and childhood immunizations.

“Families told us they were surprised anybody wanted to help them,” he said.

Knowing that help is available and normalizing the idea of asking for help makes it “more likely” parents will turn to community resources in the future. They will seek help with problems before things spiral out of control.

The DCS reports that 96 percent of families who participated in Healthy Families had no substantiated cases of abuse or neglect.

Funding was slashed, never restored

But in 2009, the Arizona Legislature cut 75 percent of Healthy Families state funding.

Some money was restored through First Things First, a voter created program to promote early childhood wellbeing.

But Healthy Families only serves a fraction of families that could benefit, say prevention advocates.

Reaching more families could help more children safely grow up in their own homes.

Of course, the caveat is “safely.” Some parents do not have the will or ability to provide a safe home for their children. In these extreme cases, children must be taken into state custody.

But many children currently in the system might have been able to remain at home if their families been given a little help. More children will be able to stay at home in the future if Arizona puts a greater emphasis on prevention.

The money can be found.

A simple way to fund prevention

When DCS was created, lawmakers increased funding to hire caseworkers. They subsequently added funding specifically to address the backlog of inactive cases, which has been reduced.

As lawmakers and the governor make decisions about next year’s state budget, they should not cut funding to DCS in response to the reduced backlog or a reduction in the number of children in foster care.

Any savings should remain in DCS and be directed to prevention and intervention efforts.

Why? Because experience and research done in Arizona shows they work.

Because children do best in their own homes.

Our View: Arizona foster care isn't working, but we can change that

Editorial board, The Republic | azcentral.com Published 11:00 a.m. MT Nov. 3, 2017 | Updated 12:00 p.m. MT Nov. 10, 2017

Editorial: Arizona puts too many kids in foster care - at great cost to kids and the state. It's time to change how we think about child abuse and neglect.



(Photo: David Wallace/The Republic)

Arizona is the negligent parent to more than 16,000 foster kids.

We did too little to help them stay with their parents. After we took them away from home, we did too little to meet their needs.

This is the hidden tragedy of our child welfare system.

It's not about the horror stories of vicious, criminal abuse.

This failure is about the much larger story of childhoods that evaporate in a bureaucracy.

Removing kids leaves lifelong scars

Most children are in foster care because of neglect, not abuse. The neglect can be the result of poverty, substance abuse or mental health issues.

Their families might have stayed together with a little help from the state. Ironically, that help is usually far cheaper than the cost of foster care. It is also far better for children.

When any child is taken from home, the system hits them “like a tornado,” says Kris Jacober, head of the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation and a foster parent for 15 years.

Some never recover.

Former foster children have high rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, homelessness, joblessness, mental illness and suicide.

They have an academic achievement gap at all grade levels, with the highest high-school dropout rate and among the lowest graduation rates, according to a study funded by the Arizona Community Foundation.

One young man in a Goodwill of Southern Arizona youth program in Tucson entered the foster-care system at age 14.

At 19, he said that when people find out he was a foster kid, “they think of me as poor, rubbish.”

He was our kid. Our responsibility. We failed him.

What keeps us from fixing the system

There are no bad guys here. We all want to help children.

Old barriers stand in the way.

These barriers keep Arizona from getting child welfare right.

One barrier is a misconception about what the “system” is and what it should do.

The system is not just one historically underfunded child welfare agency known as the Department of Child Safety. Yet the agency gets blamed when a child dies in an abusive home or is mistreated in foster care.

This distracts from the reality that our child welfare system is a vast and complex network, including courts, judges, law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the Attorney General’s office, non-profit service providers, foster parents, emergency shelters, group homes, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the Department of Health Services, behavioral health providers, community groups and schools.

The system also includes those elected officials who set policies and funding priorities, as well as the people who vote those politicians into office.

All of us.

We need to make it one unified effort, with DCS as a key component instead of a convenient whipping boy.

We need to stop looking for bad guys.

How involved should government be?

Another barrier: The understandable discomfort with the idea of government sticking its fat fingers into family life.

It's downright scary to give government the power to decide who is and isn't a good parent.

If that power is misused – as power so often is – you could lose the most important person in your life to a stupid bureaucracy. Or an incompetent one.

This summer, protesters stopped traffic in downtown Phoenix claiming DCS “kidnaps” children and ignores the due process rights of parents.

The fear of a too-powerful system can become a subtle, unspoken justification for keeping the child welfare system underfunded so it remains weak and ineffectual.

In fact, child welfare systems are underfunded in many states, including Arizona, and have been for many years.

A far better safeguard would be to pay for a top-notch system staffed by well-paid, highly experienced professionals. A system people could trust.

What's the best way to protect kids?

Mary Ellen Wilson: The case that changed child abuse

Horses had more protection than children when animal rights activists went to court in New York City on behalf of Mary Ellen Wilson. She told the judge: “Mama has been in the habit of whipping and beating me almost every day,” according to an 1874 New York Times story. She was photographed in the only clothes she had at the time of her rescue.

Another barrier: Deeply rooted philosophical differences about why and how to protect kids.

Official intervention into the most basic human relationship goes way back in our national history.

A 1642 Massachusetts law allowed magistrates to step in if parents did not “train up” their children properly, writes John E.B. Myers, law professor at the University of the Pacific, in “[A Short History of Child Protection in America.](#)”

Taking custody of children from indigent or indolent parents in Colonial times was about “the interests of the community,” where everyone’s contributions were needed to assure the success

of the colony, writes Brenda McGowan in “Child Welfare for the 21st Century: Handbook of Practices, Policies and Programs.”

It wasn't about the individual child.

By 1874, kids mattered for their own sake.

That year, a child named Mary Ellen Wilson was removed from a savagely abusive home in New York City. It happened after animal rights advocates went to court on her behalf because nobody else would help.

Mary Ellen's story resulted in the creation of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, co-founded by Henry Bergh, who had previously founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The fact that animals got protection first is not a reflection of our callousness toward children. It is evidence of deep conflicts.

Intervening on behalf of brutalized carriage horses doesn't involve breaching the sanctity of the family. Protecting children does.

After Mary Ellen's case, charities and private groups took up the cause, offering dueling solutions that are still being debated today.

The result: Remove kids, don't help parents

Some argued that a child's family might break down because of outside forces that individuals could not control, such as poverty, joblessness, illness or other factors.

Intervening to strengthen families was essential for the good of children and the community, they said.

Other reformers argued that helping parents only created dependency. People should show discipline and self-reliance, they said.

This view led to child welfare systems that did little for families and removed large numbers of children.

Arizona's foster care population reached an astonishing 18,906 in March 2016, but it has been declining. According to DCS, the figure was 16,316 in July.

Public and political pressure pushed DCS to reduce the number of children entering the system and to move children out of foster care more quickly. DCS is also focusing more on prevention, though a commitment to fully fund these efforts has not emerged at the Legislature.

Resistance to the more family-centric view that emerged after Mary Ellen's case remains. Yet this approach has a proven record.

Research shows that home-visiting programs like Healthy Families reduce stress and improve how parents interact with their children. Yet Healthy Families is not well funded in Arizona.

There is also a growing body of knowledge about the lifelong negative impacts of adverse childhood experiences – experiences that include being taken into foster care. Arizona should use this knowledge to accept its responsibility toward the children currently in foster care and to shape a system that helps the families so children can safely remain at home.

Our View: What happens to the 16,000 kids in Arizona foster care?

Editorial board, The Republic | azcentral.com Published 11:00 a.m. MT Nov. 3, 2017 | Updated 11:49 a.m. MT Nov. 10, 2017

If we want to fix Arizona's broken child-welfare system once and for all, we must rethink how we view child abuse and neglect.

Editorial: Arizona's failure to meet the needs of thousands of foster kids has deep and long-lasting consequences.



(Photo: David Wallace/The Republic)

You are on a path you didn't choose. Behind you are foggy memories of home and family. But you can't go back.

All around are strangers who tell you what to do. Foster parents, group home personnel, caseworkers, judges. They say: Just keep going.

Up ahead is a tunnel marked "18th birthday." Go through it and you're on your own.

"At 18 you get this burst of freedom," says 20-year-old Sarah Boyce, a metro-Phoenix resident who was in the foster care system from age 12 to 18, "it's really easy to get yourself in trouble ... you feel like no one cares."

Demons reach at you from all sides.

Guilt. Fear. Regret. Shame.

Imagine being called a 'throwaway kid'

“We blame ourselves for the hurt we go through,” says 27-year-old Delia Gray, who lives in the Phoenix area and entered the system at 12 and stayed until she aged out.

Imagine being a teenager – an awkward age under the best of circumstances – and being given a measured amount of shampoo and a time limit for your shower.

“It’s hard,” says Boyce, who adds that a group home is full of “drama.”

“It was such a crazy environment, it almost made me crazy. It made me want to act out,” she said.

Imagine longing for what the other kids at school have: a family.

“You really want to feel like a normal kid,” said Boyce, whose goals now include becoming a support for her mother.

Imagine wondering if anybody loves you.

Courtneyrose Hofstede says the kids at school called her “the throwaway kid” and said “your mother doesn’t love you.” She was in and out of the system in metro Phoenix from the time she was a baby until she aged out.

Gray is philosophical about it: “Things happen in life that we can’t control.”

Their lives are defined by strangers

For foster kids, just about everything is out of control.

Hofstede remembers being picked up at school by a caseworker who said her placement had been changed. She didn’t get to say goodbye to her sister.

Relationships with siblings are often collateral damage.

“When I was younger, I wanted to stay with my sisters,” says 23-year-old Eric Davis, who was taken from his metro Phoenix home at 5 and didn’t leave the system until he aged out.

He spent some years in a placement with his sisters. Then they were split up. “I don’t know the details of why,” he said. He has since lost contact.

Foster kids’ lives are defined by courtroom decisions and are lived under rules made by people they hardly know.

“People say: ‘I’m so sorry,’ but people also ignore what’s going on,” says Boyce.

Davis says when people learn he grew up in the system, “they kind of start judging you. It’s like: ‘What did you do?’ ‘What did your parents do?’ instead of giving you a chance.”

Foster kids “are like everyone else,” he says, “you should judge them for who they are.”

We do judge. And pity. Even if we shouldn't.

“Kids are kids and foster kids are just kids,” says Boyce. “They need support, and they need to be able to act like kids.”

Foster care has its own consequences

The state's failure to meet the needs of foster kids goes deep and has long-lasting consequences.

Foster parents say the children who come into the system often don't get the help they need to deal with the emotional trauma they've been through.

A study funded by the Arizona Community Foundation also found foster children had a school achievement gap so significant they comprise their own at-risk subgroup.

Lower test scores, high dropout rates and low high-school graduation rates can limit the future for these children and trap them in a cycle of failure.

A 2015 class action lawsuit alleges that Arizona's treatment of foster kids “shocks the conscience” and exposes foster children “to harm and an unreasonable risk of harm.”

The Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, Coppersmith Brockelman, PLC and Children's Rights Inc. represent the plaintiffs in that action, which has not yet gone to trial.

Arizona took record numbers of children into foster care with little thought for what it meant to grow up in limbo. Despite recent efforts to turn that around, more than 16,000 children remain in the system.

Helping them is a community effort

Most are there because of neglect, not abuse.

Arizona has begun to acknowledge the importance of prevention and intervention to keep families together and keep kids at home instead of subjecting them to the trauma out-of-home care.

Arizona also needs to fully awaken to the needs of foster children.

“Keep an open heart. Not an open mind, an open heart,” says Gray. “You don't know what these kids have been through.”

Foster children struggle against tough odds. They need more help.

But the experience of some foster kids shows why this is not a lost cause.

Our View: Not all parents who neglect their kids are monsters

Editorial board, The Republic | azcentral.com Published 11:00 a.m. MT Nov. 3, 2017 | Updated 12:01 p.m. MT Nov. 10, 2017

Editorial: Most kids in Arizona foster care have parents who have made tragic - but fixable - mistakes. It's in the state's best interest to help reunite them.



(Photo: David Wallace/The Republic)

Some crimes against children are so horrendous you can only see the perpetrators as inhuman creatures. It's understandable. But that perception hurts the majority of kids in the system.

Before we look at why, let's look at the monsters.

The tormentors of 10-year-old Ame Deal deserve no sympathy.

The little girl died in 2011 after she was forced to do heavy exercise in triple-digit July heat and then stuffed into a 31- by-14-by-12-inch footlocker overnight.

Four family members participated in her torture. One, Sammantha Allen, was sentenced to death for her role in abuse that had gone on for years. Others are in prison. They are vicious criminals. There are other such horror stories. Too many. They make headlines and they make people feel sick inside.

Kids don't thrive in foster care

These horrific cases show why our state needs a child welfare system with the power to intervene on behalf of vulnerable children and the resources to move with surgical precision.

But the vast majority of children are removed from their homes for neglect, not abuse.

Their parents may be out of work, homeless, substance addicted or mentally ill. They may be so worn down by toxic levels of stress that they can't meet their kids' needs.

They make mistakes. But they are human mistakes.

"Not all of us are monsters," says Ed Casillas, whose children were taken by Arizona's child welfare system six years ago when he was using meth.

As a society, we make moral judgments about parents like Casillas.

This hurts kids.

Why? Because children don't thrive in foster care. They need families. Their families. And if we don't think the parents are worth saving, we won't provide the help they need. Their kids will languish in foster care.

Nixing poverty is the best prevention



(Photo: Linda Valdez/The Republic)

Ed Casillas said he had "a lot of shame and guilt" over losing his kids.

Reunification is the case plan goal for more than half the more than 16,000 children in out-of-home care in Arizona. Helping their biological parents succeed is essential to safely moving those children out of foster care and back home.

In fact, helping families before children are removed is best of all because it spares children the trauma of being taking away from everything familiar.

But families are hurting in Arizona.

Addressing poverty is "the best prevention program going," says Elizabeth Bartholet, who teaches civil rights and family law at Harvard Law School and specializes in child welfare.

Yet 25 percent of children live in poverty in our state, 30 percent of children have parents who lack secure employment and 38 percent of children live in single-parent households, according to the 2017 Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Book.

Experts say many parents in the system have substance abuse issues. Unfortunately, the Department of Child Safety does not have good data on how many. It should.

More than half of the births in Arizona are covered by Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the state's health program for the poor and working poor, according to AHCCCS.

These kids are born into families that face tough odds.

Huge odds to get their kids back

When the parents stumble, the system that's supposed to help can seem like the enemy.

Kris Jacober, head of the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation and a foster parent for 15 years, says biological parents of children in Arizona's system "felt as though they were in a black hole and they couldn't get out."

They had to overcome their anger at the child welfare system, then work within that system on big, personal problems like substance abuse, criminal involvement or mental health issues.

"A lot depends on their relationship with the caseworker," Jacober said.

Yet according to the most recent semi-annual report from the Arizona Department of Child Safety, only 55 percent of biological parents of kids in foster care had received required visits from caseworkers.

Casillas was told early on that if he wanted his kids back, he'd have to do the work to make that happen.

He regained custody after he stopped using drugs, passed regular drug tests and attended a variety of required classes, including relapse prevention, substance abuse education, parenting, health relationships and anger management.

He also attended peer support group meetings, where he met Bob Heslinga, executive director of Aviva Children's Services in Tucson.

"Bob greeted me like a normal human being," says Casillas, who said that helped him deal with "a lot of shame and guilt" over losing his kids.

Overcoming the 'bad parent' stigma



(Photo: Linda Valdez/The Republic)

Lauren Mausbach was a 'functioning addict' when she lost her two boys in 2012.

Heslinga says he set up the parent peer support group along an Alcoholics Anonymous model, drawing on his own quest for sobriety years ago: "I didn't need to learn about being an alcoholic, I wanted to learn how to live sober."

In the peer support group, people learn how to live for their kids.

"We share stories, we share tears," says Casillas, who now works as a co-facilitator of the Parent Peer Support Group at Aviva.

They also share a stigma.

"I thought parents whose kids were removed were horrible people," said Angelica Elias, whose two children were removed in 2012 when she was using cocaine and marijuana.

She's clean now, she's got her children back and she works as a parent support coordinator at Aviva.

"Not every parent who has lost a kid is a lost cause," she says.

But many of them face daunting odds.

Lauren Mausbach was a "functioning addict" when she lost her two boys in 2012. They are back with her now and she's been free of meth use for five years.

Mausbach is a substance abuse recovery coach with the Arizona Families First program provided through Terros Health in Phoenix. She says many of the parent addicts she works with lack a network of support because their families and friends are also addicts.

In order to stay clean, they have to build a new support network – and they have to do it under a cloud.

We can't just focus on the monsters

“They already have a victim mentality and if they feel judged they feel more like a victim,” she says. That provides an excuse for failure and makes it harder to pump up the courage to make major life changes.

Meanwhile, the kids wait in foster care while their childhoods evaporate.

Arizona has law enforcement and judicial solutions for those who criminally abuse their children. Such people belong in jail and their children deserve compassionate help to overcome an unspeakable betrayal.

But focusing only on those cases hurts other kids.

Arizona needs more robust prevention, intervention and recovery services for families that need a little help to succeed.

That starts with recognizing that most of the parents in the system are just flawed human beings, not monsters.

About this report

In 2016, when the number of children removed from their families peaked at more than 18,000, the Arizona Community Foundation gave The Arizona Republic and azcentral.com a three-year grant to support in-depth research on the topic. As part of that effort, editorial writer Linda Valdez and our other staff experts investigate the reasons behind the surge in foster children and the systems meant to support and protect them.

Arizona's foster care boards don't look like their communities. Here's why that matters

Maria Polletta, The Republic | azcentral.com Published 5:00 a.m. MT Nov. 12, 2017

Children of color represent about 60 percent of kids in out-of-home care, while Arizona's foster care review boards are overwhelmingly white.

Experts have long recognized inequalities in America's child-welfare system: When kids share identical circumstances except for race, black and Native American children enter foster care more often, spend more time in the system and wait longer to be adopted.

In an attempt to ensure fair treatment for kids taken from their parents, Arizona lawmakers decades ago mandated that Foster Care Review Boards — which help decide the fates of children in foster care — mirror the races, ethnicities and income levels of the communities they serve.

They don't.

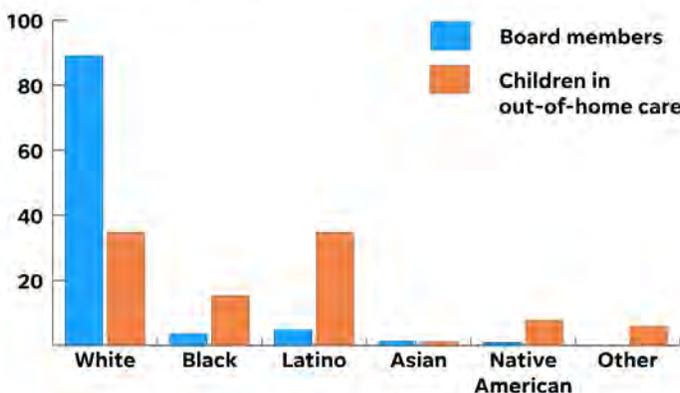
Though children of color represent about 60 percent of kids in out-of-home care, Foster Care Review Boards are overwhelmingly white. State records indicate nearly 90 percent of board members in Maricopa County and 100 percent of board members in six other counties identify as "Anglo American."

The lack of diversity among decision-makers can exacerbate minority families' impression that the deck is stacked against them, according to parents, board members and other experts. And research shows cultural biases can indeed affect the outcome of child-welfare cases.

"These volunteers are put in place to represent the best interest of the child," said Tracey Feild, Director of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's child-welfare strategy group. "But if they don't understand the context of the family, that can be very hard to do, and mistakes can be made."

Arizona Foster Care Review Boards

The volunteer groups that help decide what happens to foster children are overwhelmingly white.



Sources: Arizona Department of Child Safety and Arizona Dependent Children's Services Division

Arizona Supreme Court spokeswoman Heather Murphy acknowledged that the court's Dependent Children's Services Division, which manages the review-board system, "has had some successes and struggles" with recruitment.

Attracting male and ethnically diverse applicants is challenging, she said.

"Increasing diversity is a goal we want to achieve," she said. "By admitting that we are not as diverse as we aspire to be, we hope to inspire others to serve."

'Eyes and ears of the court'

Arizona's Legislature was one of the first in the U.S. to establish citizen-review boards for foster cases in 1978. Lawmakers wanted kids to find permanent homes as quickly as possible.

Today, the state has about 150 Foster Care Review Boards, more than half of them in Maricopa County. They draw volunteer members from education, social work, health care and other industries.

Each three- to five-member board meets monthly to monitor the cases of up to 100 children. Boards evaluate the safety, necessity and appropriateness of their placements, as well as analyze whether the Department of Child Safety is making "reasonable efforts" toward more permanent resolutions.

In August, for instance, a Maricopa County board weighed a case in which a toddler's mother continued to struggle with addiction a year and a half after he'd been removed from her care. The board disagreed with DCS's goal of reuniting the mother and child.

Board members cannot issue or enforce orders, but their recommendations are shared widely. Judges, biological and foster families, counselors, attorneys and other relevant parties receive copies.

"Their report is usually part of the decision-making process for me," said Bruce Cohen, a juvenile-court judge. "There are cases ... where a specific need of a child, foster family or parent is not being fully addressed, and the FCRB highlights that area of need."

Maurice Portley, a retired judge who heard juvenile cases from 1995-2001, said the boards "help keep the case on track, whether for reunification, permanent guardianship, or termination of parental rights to allow permanency for the child."

The review-board system seems to work better "than expecting a judge who's got a full caseload to get to know each of the children in care," said Murphy, the Supreme Court spokeswoman. She said members "act as the eyes and ears of the court."

Prospective board members must fill out an application that includes questions about family income level, gender, ethnicity, education and occupation. They must get fingerprinted, submit to a background check and complete an interview.

The judges who appoint board members are "required to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that each board represents the socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups of the county in which it serves," according to state guidelines.

Though judges receive copies of member applications, Murphy said they largely rely on the review-board program to put forth diverse candidates.

Fewer resources, more cases?

Among minority children in foster care, black and Native American kids tend to fare the worst.

Researchers have drawn different conclusions as to why.

Many point to the impact of poverty, which affects African- and Native Americans at disproportionate rates.

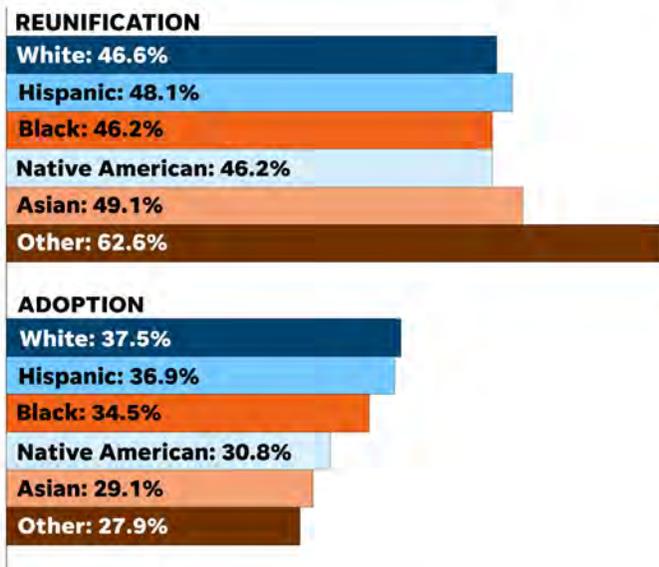
People from any income level can experience mental illness, substance abuse, and other problems that sometimes lead to child neglect and abuse. But poor parents can't easily pay for services that would help them avoid state intervention, the way an affluent parent with a drug problem could hire a nanny or pay for rehab.

Low-income parents also have less access to legal help, affordable housing and other resources that tend to facilitate a child's return.

Still, research suggests poverty alone isn't enough to explain why minority kids are overrepresented in the foster system.

Arizona children exiting foster care

These are the two most common outcomes for children leaving foster care. Data is from the period ending March 31, 2017.



Source: Arizona Department of Child Safety

Other studies over the last two decades have identified bias — both on the part of those who report families for abuse and neglect and those who decide what happens next —as another key factor.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty found that people who report families to child-protective services, as well as child-welfare officials, can rely on "pre-existing beliefs about the ways in which parents of a particular race tend to behave toward their children" when analyzing potential neglect or abuse.

"There certainly has been concern expressed about that," said Feild, the child-welfare director. "How does a white upper-middle-class person with a law degree fairly understand the socioeconomic and cultural differences that a low-income African-American child or Latino child can have?"

A fair shake

Any parent facing the removal of a child might feel unfairly judged or dismissed by DCS officials.

Gladys Malano, whose grandson was removed from his biological home in Chandler and adopted, said dealing with "all white folks" as she fought for custody of the boy added to the feeling that her African-American family wasn't getting a fair shake.

In the six years she spent dealing with Arizona's child-welfare system, she said, she never once encountered a black official.

"That's not to say black people can't discriminate against other black people," Malano said. "But I always felt like I was getting stereotyped."

Malano primarily clashed with her grandson's case manager, she said. Encounters with his Foster Care Review Board made her feel like board members "really didn't want to hear what I had to say," either.

"Out of the whole time that my grandson was in care, I probably interacted with them two to three times," Malano said. "No more than that, because when I got on the phone and told them my concerns, they blew me to the side. They would talk over me, totally disrespect me."

Murphy, the Supreme Court spokeswoman, said "not all who come before a board will be pleased with the outcome, but our members pride themselves on at least allowing everyone to be heard." Court guidelines say Foster Care Review Boards should create "an atmosphere of trust, with dignity and respect maintained through participatory involvement of all those having interest in the welfare of the child."

Such an atmosphere can be difficult to maintain amid widespread and deep-rooted perceptions in minority communities that child-welfare officials want to take kids away, not help families.

According to a sweeping study funded by the federal Administration for Children and Families, that distrust causes some families to resist cooperating with officials, increasing the risk of a child's temporary or permanent removal.

Some child-welfare professionals corroborate parents' views that a family's race or socioeconomic status can influence decisions on a case.

Another report sponsored by the ACF found some case workers "felt that many staff, but Caucasian staff in particular, lacked exposure to cultures other than their own and had no context for understanding the cultural norms and practices of minority populations."

Cultural gaps

Foster Care Review Board members of various ethnic backgrounds described cases they'd struggled with because of cultural differences.

Some involved religious convictions, such as beliefs that caused parents to resist administering medication deemed necessary for a child's well-being.

Many involved discipline: Corporal punishment and other measures considered acceptable in other countries can lead to a child's removal in the U.S.

"We had a case with a family where the mother was, I think, from the Philippines, and they did some form of caning as punishment," said Angela Fischer, a review-board chair and former child-welfare worker who has fostered more than 20 kids.

"The lady loved her child, and this was what her family did where she grew up," said Fischer, who is white. "But the child ended up with bruises. Here, you can't do that."

In that case, DCS returned the child to her parents after the mother "learned the rules and customs here," Fischer said. The child's father was from the U.S., she said, and "they had enough solid family support in this culture to help her figure out how to behave with the child."

The Children's Bureau, part of the federal Department of Health and Human Services, encourages child-welfare agencies to educate parents about U.S.laws and help them identify alternate disciplinary approaches" when "practices that might be seen as abusive or neglectful by mainstream standards ... have a cultural component."

Volunteers say it's not always possible to bridge that gap.

A high-profile case reviewed by Phoenix resident Lloyd Fields' board, for instance, involved a young refugee girl who was sexually assaulted by a group of neighbors and then punished by her parents for being victimized.

Though the state dropped child-abuse charges against the parents, it removed the girl from their care and placed her with a long-term guardian.

'Speaking for them'

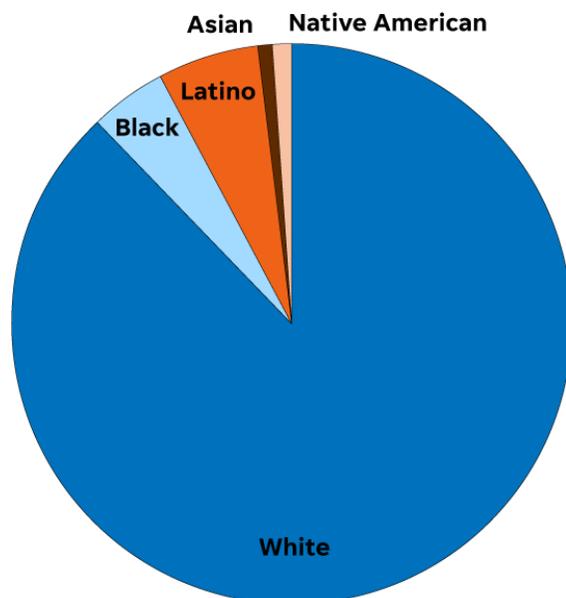
In interviews with *The Republic*, minority review-board members seemed acutely aware of the panels' lack of diversity.

Describing himself as "one of the few blacks that serve on the boards," Fields, 69, said the state has "diversity when it comes to foster homes, so we should have diversity when it comes to who reviews the cases."

"Especially when you have to make the very, very tough decision to support a case manager recommending severance and adoption — if it's a black family and a white board, obviously they're going to think that the board is against them," Fields said. "I can only assume that it lends some comfort to the family on the other side of the table when they see a board member who looks like they do."

Foster Care Review Boards in Maricopa County

The volunteer groups that help decide what happens to foster children in Maricopa County is 88 percent white.



Source: Arizona Dependent Children's Services Division

Haia Abdel Jaber, an Arab-American volunteer from Litchfield Park, said she quickly noticed the boards were "largely white" after her appointment.

Abdel, who was born in Puerto Rico, recounted going out of her way to ensure other board members didn't overlook considerations specific to minority populations.

"When we had cases with kids who were brought to the U.S. as children, I would sit there and say, 'Is this person in this case a citizen? Can we prepare a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status) application here?'" said Abdel, 36, referring to the Obama-era program that shields some young unauthorized immigrants from deportation.

Like Fields, Abdel said greater board diversity would "minimize that kind of disadvantage (families) feel at already being interviewed or questioned by us."

"It would give the people that are coming in some positive indication that somebody who is like them is speaking for them instead of just judging them," she said.