



TeamChild



COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT **FY23**



Letter from our Interim Executive Director



I am honored and grateful to be invited to step into an interim role as Executive Director at TeamChild. Throughout my many years working with young people at TeamChild as an attorney, I have loved partnering with clients to help them accomplish their goals, assert their rights, and align community resources for them. My experience working with clients still shapes my work every day. In 2021, TeamChild formalized our commitment to systemic change by creating a position focused on policy change. I was honored to be our first Director of Policy, and now I am thrilled to step into this leadership role to further our vision of a community that truly embraces all young people.

In the past year, we have spent time in thoughtful reflection on how we operationalize our core values of equity, anti – racism, and accountability. We are working to dismantle systemic oppression both within and outside of TeamChild. To that end, our staff and board have chosen me to serve in this leadership role for the next year as we explore the shared leadership structure that best moves us forward. From a programmatic perspective, we have reorganized our legal teams to better serve youth within our focus areas of housing, education, and the juvenile legal system. Additionally, we are also expanding our Youth Advisory Board 's role and opportunity to shape change in our state.

This is a dynamic time for TeamChild, and while we have made a conscious shift within some areas of our work, many things have remained the same. We remain deeply committed to the center of our work and mission - walking alongside young people facing the highest risk of incarceration and criminalization. Our key strategy continues to be creating accountability in the schools, families, service providers, courts, and systems that should be there for our clients. We continue to do that work individually for clients and systemically through policy advocacy in partnership with so many others.

We hope you will join us in championing the systemic changes we seek so that all young people have access to safe housing, educational opportunities, and real healing and rehabilitation. I look forward to learning more about you - the donors, partners and volunteers who make this work possible. Together, we can do great things for young people.

In Community,
Karen Pillar



TeamChild's 2024 Staff Retreat

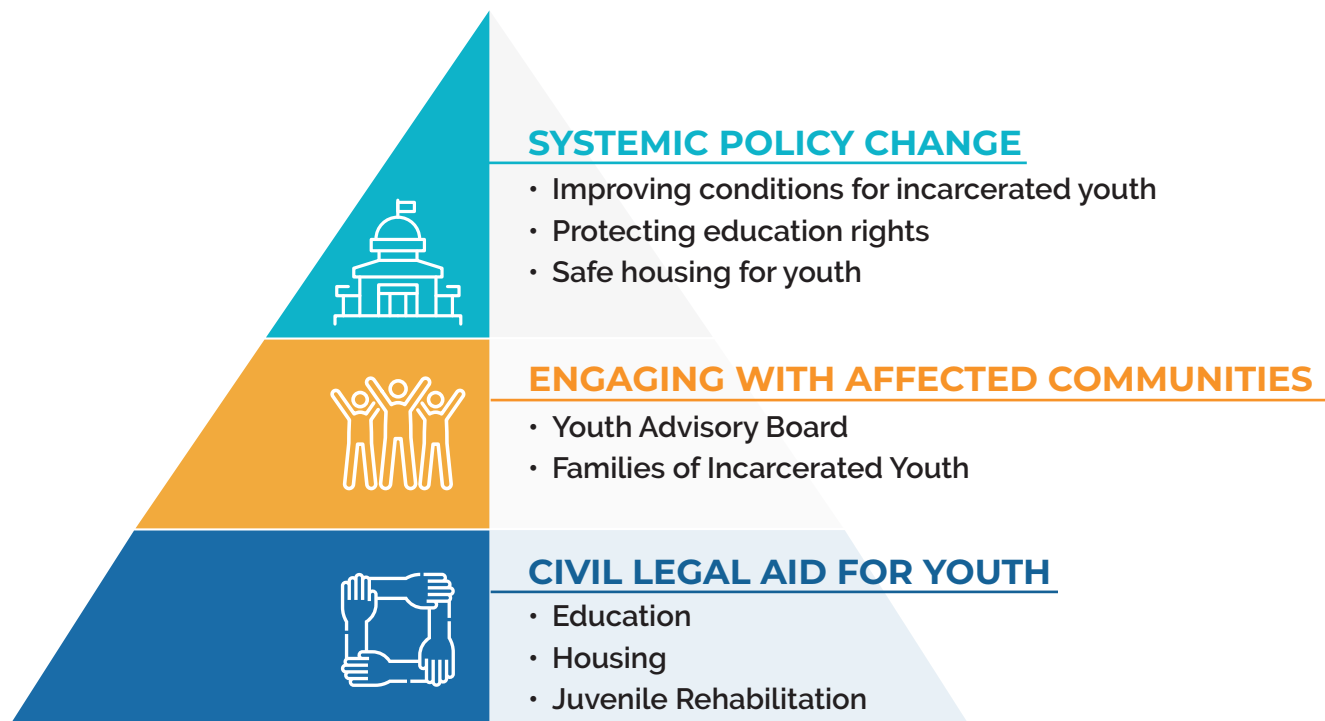
Building the inclusive world we imagine would not be possible without the dedicated support of our foundation partners, corporate and legal partners, and donors. Thank you for being a part of this work.

TeamChild Mission

Team Child's Mission is to uphold the rights of youth involved, or at risk of becoming involved, in the juvenile legal system to help them secure the education, healthcare, housing, and other supports they need to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Our vision is that young people have power and experience unconditional belonging at school, at home, and in their communities.

To accomplish this big vision, we focus on:

- ▶ **Legal Services** - We provide free legal services to young people ages 12 - 24. We provide flexible, community - based services to youth in King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima counties as well as statewide legal services for youth in need of housing of education support. Additionally, TeamChild is the primary legal provider for young people currently incarcerated at Washington's juvenile prisons (JR) statewide.
- ▶ **Policy and Advocacy** - Our policy team works to identify larger, systemic barriers that young people come up against and work to solve them through targeted reforms in education, housing/ homelessness, child welfare, and the juvenile legal system.
- ▶ **Youth and Community Engagement** - We aim for all of our work to be informed and directed by our impacted community of youth, family, and partners. Our current community engagement work is spearheaded by our Youth Advisory Board - a group of young people with a range of lived experiences in the systems and barriers impacting our clients.





CIVIL LEGAL AID FOR YOUTH

Supreme Court Case

This past year, TeamChild has been working alongside our client M.G. to bring his case about being illegally removed from school to the Washington Supreme Court. In March, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of M.G. This historic win is a first for TeamChild and helps to assert the right of students to resume their education at the end of a suspension.

M.G.'s story unfortunately has a lot of similarities to the experiences of other young people TeamChild works with on educational issues. After a 12-day suspension that the school gave him, M.G. was not permitted to return to his regular school and was instead pushed out into an online education program. This is a trend we have been seeing even more post – COVID, with online learning being used as punishment for certain students despite online learning often being an inadequate or inaccessible option.

M.G., like many of the young people we work with, did not have access to a computer or the internet at home and was unsuccessful in online school despite his attempts. For years, M.G. and his TeamChild advocates asked for a school plan that would meet M.G.'s needs and make up for the time he missed. However, Yakima School District continued to refuse, even appealing a court decision saying the school district violated M.G.'s rights and needed to help him catch up. By the time his case reached the supreme court, M.G. had completely missed out on his entire high school education.

This supreme court win is not only a positive for M.G. – who should receive support to make up for critical education lost-- this case also helps clarify that students should not be indefinitely pushed into online school as a form of discipline. This precedence is important in upholding the rights of students to access equitable education and to return to school following disciplinary actions.

In addition to this big win with the Washington Supreme Court and representing our clients, we have also been working on the following key projects:

Improved Client Intake Systems

We have shifted our intake process from a regional approach to now being coordinated by one intake team that supports new clients and referrals across the state. New clients can find us more easily via our new online referral form at teamchild.org/legal-services

Juvenile Rehabilitation Report

TeamChild's legal team supports and responds to the legal needs of young people who are incarcerated at our state juvenile prison facilities. In response to reports of increasingly hostile and abusive conditions within these facilities, we wrote an in-depth report that details the escalating concerns and contains recommendations to alleviate the current harm for young people. Read it at:



Detention and Boarding project

The detention boarding project focuses on youth who are in county detention facilities and end up stuck there because their family is unable or unwilling to safely house the young person upon release. This year, we focused on providing individual legal support for clients in this position to help them find a path to safe housing while also working on systemic reform to resolve the root of this problem. Our report is available at:



In the past year, as a result of working with a TeamChild attorney:



100%

of young people with challenges around court involvement experienced improved outcomes



95%

of young people with educational challenges were connected to education support services



76%

of young people with challenges around housing reduced their barriers to safe housing

TeamChild is committed to serving young people who are at the highest risk of incarceration or criminalization and/or young people who might not otherwise be able to access high quality, youth – centered legal support. We center youth and communities who have been most impacted by challenges and barriers within systems of housing, education, and the juvenile legal system.

Of the young people served by TeamChild in the past year

At least

81%

came from households at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line

15%

were experiencing homelessness upon intake with TeamChild

11%

identify as having a disability



SYSTEMIC POLICY CHANGE

POLICY WINS IN 2024

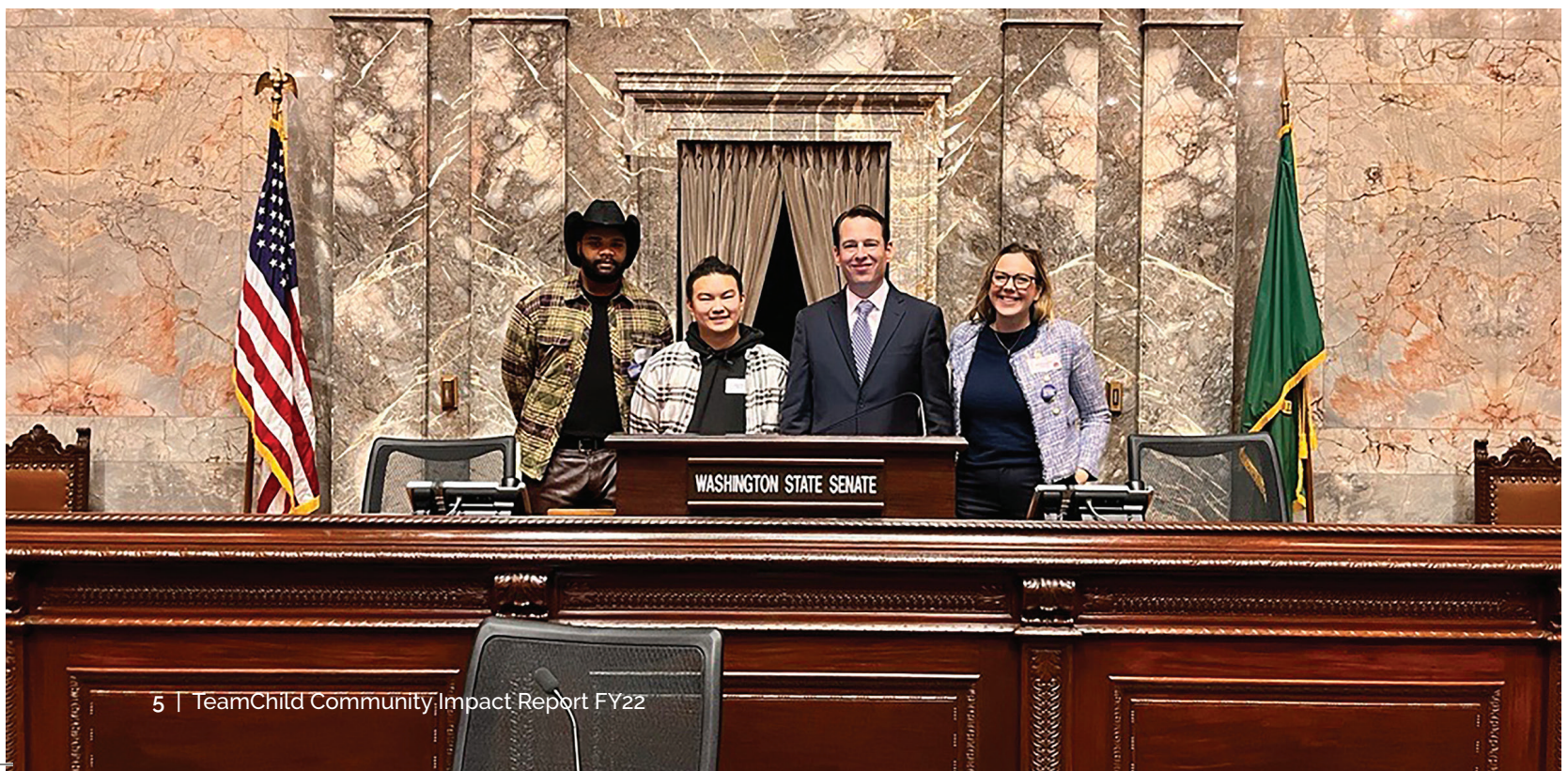
We had some ambitious goals in the 2024 legislative session. TeamChild's advocacy this session centered on a few key efforts:

Nothing about Us Without Us

TeamChild's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a group of young people who have been impacted by systems in which TeamChild advocates for reforms such as the juvenile legal system, special education, child welfare, and others. The Nothing About Us Without Us bill requires the state of Washington to have clear representation by people who have disabilities in any policy work that impacts people who have disabilities. The YAB found the bill to be very compelling and aligned with their values. We are so glad the youth advisory board members had a chance to help advocate for this bill and see their work pay off when it passed this session.

Shifting the Burden of Proof

When families disagree with their school about what kind of support their student needs, the matter is decided in an administrative hearing which can resemble a formal legal hearing. In the past, parents and family members had the burden of proving to the judge (presenting evidence and calling on witnesses) that the school's services were not appropriate. We successfully advocated for a law that shifts the burden proof in these hearings to the school – removing burden from students and families who very often do not have the resources to lead administrative hearings. We are thrilled to see this reform around shifting the burden of proof pass in 2024 and really appreciate the legislators and community advocates who worked with us achieve to this result.





2025 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Resentencing Hearings for Young Adults

A group of young people at the Green Hill Juvenile Rehabilitation program drafted a bill which would allow young people a hearing to demonstrate their personal growth, accountability, and healing in consideration of a reduced sentence. Many young people who are currently incarcerated have worked hard to better themselves through rehabilitation, education and employment and deserve a chance to demonstrate their growth and change. We are working alongside affected youth and community to bring this bill forward.



Elimination of Isolation and Restraint

Many schools and mental health facilities have adopted isolation and restraint tactics that originated in the carceral system as a way to control student behaviors. TeamChild believes that our schools and institutions can and must do better and hope that as we continue to invest in the behavioral health support, staff training, technical support, and community resources that are designed to support all students, we will achieve the goal of eliminating these harmful and outdated tactics.



Housing for Youth Upon Release

One of our main priorities for the next year is to continue our work to support youth under 18 who do not have a safe or stable home to release to when they leave a detention facility or other place of incarceration. In these cases, young people do not have a family that is willing or able to care for them and the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is not stepping in to ensure safe housing. Youth at the end of their detention are stuck in detention facilities beyond their term because of a lack of safe housing options.



Sealing Juvenile Legal Records

Even when a young person is able to get their juvenile record sealed, they do not always remain confidential. Once criminal records are on the internet, they never really disappear. Our goal for next year is to create an expectation of confidentiality in the juvenile legal system starting from when a young person first is brought into that system. The records will be protected from being made publicly available on the internet in the first place. Young people will have the opportunity to truly seal their records and not have to carry the mistakes of their youth with them forever.



Improving Conditions for Incarcerated Youth

The conditions in the DCYF (Department of Children, Youth, and Families) Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) state prison system are unacceptable for our youth. Facilities are overcrowded and lack adequate staffing. Poor conditions have led to an atmosphere of tension and instances of violence, and there is a lack of meaningful education, mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and opportunities for growth. Together with impacted youth and families we are working to hold DCYF accountable to make rehabilitation a realistic outcome for every young person in their custody at JR facilities.



ENGAGING WITH AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Youth Advisory Board Update

TeamChild's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a group of youth and young adults ages 14 - 24 from communities across Washington who have lived experience similar to those of our clients. They may have experienced barriers to education, unfair school discipline, juvenile court involvement, foster care, homelessness, or immigration. Or, they may identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or Black, Native/Indigenous, or as a Person of Color. The YAB partners with youth from their communities, TeamChild, and other community advocacy groups to identify barriers to youth success and design advocacy solutions to these problems. In the past year, the YAB made these important strides forward in their work:

- Grew their capacity for community and policy advocacy through trainings on issues around education, housing, and the Juvenile legal system as well as trainings on the legislative bill writing process.
- Facilitated youth listening sessions that gathered young people from across the state to gain further insight on the barriers and challenges that they are facing. These listening sessions inform community trainings and our legislative priorities.
- Developed educational videos for youth focused on suicide prevention and mental health.
- Participated in another Youth Action Day in Olympia, partnering with other community groups to advocate for legislative reform to transform Washington's education system.
- Established youth – centered leadership and decision – making practices to ensure that the YAB continues to be authentically led by young people with partnership from TeamChild staff members.

We are thrilled with the continued growth of TeamChild's Youth Advisory Board and can't wait to see what they accomplish in the coming year.

Q: "Why is it important for youth to participate in the legislative process?"



"A lot of people often forget that youth are members of the community and they should have a say on what happens to them and their greater community. Youth are usually underrepresented. It's common adults think "you're just a kid, what do you know? Why do you care?" It's important because those issues are affecting youth. Lobby day is important because it provides a way for youth to provide voice to legislators, for people who are underrepresented."

– Diego Gonzales, TeamChild Youth Advisory Board Member



Teaming up with Impacted Youth and Families

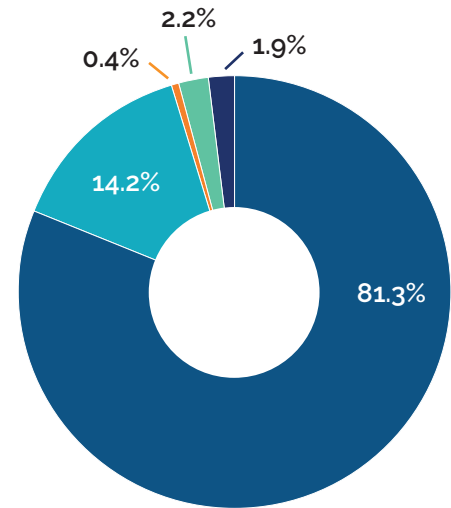
TeamChild's founding was based upon representing young people who were impacted by juvenile legal involvement, and we expanded this work 5 years ago when we grew to directly serve the young people who are held at the DCYF (Department of Children, Youth, and Families) Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) state prison system. Through this, we have developed even stronger ties to both youth in the prison system as well as their parents, loved ones, and community. Working alongside the family and community helps to ground our work in the relationships and connections that are so critical in helping young people get through their time in our juvenile legal system.

In the past year, those ties have strengthened as we all have tried to respond to the cascading challenges coming from DCYF JR facilities that has included overcrowded conditions, lack of adequate staffing, increased exposure to drugs inside the prison, escalation of tension and fights among the youth, and a lack of meaningful education, mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and opportunities for growth. We have held our own broken hearts alongside the families who had hoped that the time their young people spent at JR would truly give them an opportunity to heal. Unfortunately, this year has brought a lot more harm for everyone. While we know there are no easy answers to address the unmet needs of young people before they end up in the legal system, as well as after they have created real harm, we do know that we will get to the best answers together, led by the youth and their families who know at a deep level what they really need.

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES - audited

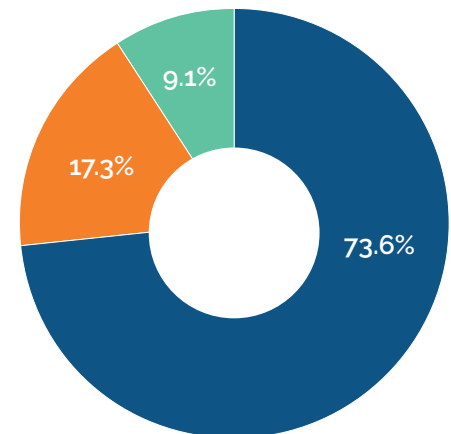
Support and Revenue

● Government Grants	\$ 1,936,689	81.3%
● Contributions	\$ 337,534	14.2%
● Contracts	\$ 10,465	0.4%
● Special Events	\$ 52,316	2.2%
● Other Income	\$ 46,472	1.9%
Total Support & Revenue	\$ 2,383,476	100%



Expenses

● Program Services	\$ 3,050,246	73.6%
● Management & General	\$ 715,550	17.3%
● Fundraising	\$ 377,995	9.1%
Total Expenses	\$ 4,143,791	100.0%



Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$ 3,438,073
Net Assets End of Year	\$ 1,677,758
Change in Net Assets	(\$ 1,760,315)



Support the work of advancing justice for youth with a donation to TeamChild!
 Make an investment in the lives of young people and stand beside us as we work to build a world where all youth are supported and thriving in their communities.

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Amanda Rodriguez
Education Advocate, Educational Service District 105

Nancy Talner
Retired



"I support TeamChild because I believe in the potential of our youth – especially in those who are finding their way in the face of significant adversity. I have seen what a difference it makes for them to have a highly skilled and compassionate advocate by their side to make our systems accountable."

– Sally Pritchard, TeamChild Board Member

TeamChild Staff

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Advice and Referral Team*

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Staff Attorney, JR Institutions & Reentry Program

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Sara Zier
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Shawna Sherman
Director of Finance and Administration

Shegaw Masresha
Staff Accountant

Sonia Thomas
*Case Support Coordinator, JR Institutions
and Reentry Project*

Susan Straka
Staff Attorney – Spokane



Mission

TeamChild upholds the rights of youth involved, or at risk of being involved, in the juvenile justice system to help them secure the education, healthcare, housing and other supports they need to achieve positive outcomes in their lives.

Vision

Young people have power and experience unconditional belonging at school, at home and in their communities.

Values

▶ Youth-centered

We take bold, creative action in support of young people's self-determination.

▶ Wholeness

We give and receive real support and care for ourselves, clients and communities. We bring our whole selves to work.

▶ Accountability

We operate from an anti-oppression foundation. We act with integrity and intentionality and encourage each other to be better every day.

▶ Anti-racism

We operate with anti-racist principles* to undo racism and end all intersecting forms of oppression.

**Anti-Racist Principles by The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond*



TeamChild

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