

WESTCHESTER  
**CHILDREN'S**  
ASSOCIATION

Children's Champions

Since 1914



2023

**ANNUAL REPORT**

[wca4kids.org](http://wca4kids.org) | [@wca4kids](https://www.instagram.com/wca4kids)



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense pride and gratitude for the milestones achieved and the impact made by the Westchester Children's Association (WCA) in 2023. Our commitment to advocating for the children and youth of Westchester County remains unwavering, and our collective efforts have continued to bring about positive change in our community.

**2023 was a pivotal year for our advocacy initiatives. Our educational efforts on social and emotional challenges young people face in Westchester resulted in increased funding for mental health services.** Our collaboration with local policymakers led to the implementation of new policies aimed at reducing juvenile incarceration rates and promoting restorative justice practices. These policies are already showing promising results, with a noticeable decrease in youth detentions and an increase in community-based interventions.

**Our annual Advocacy Breakfast featured Edward Fergus of Rutgers University who focused attention on the intersection of policy and advocacy in classrooms.** He challenged us to confront our biases and prejudices so we can understand how young people are affected, especially those who are often overlooked and marginalized.

**Data-driven decision-making has always been a cornerstone of our approach. In 2023, we published our signature Children by the Numbers publication highlighting the state of child well-being in Westchester County.** This report has been instrumental in guiding our advocacy efforts and has provided valuable insights for our partners and policymakers. Our commitment to transparency and accountability ensures that our work remains focused on the most pressing needs of our community.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and community partners. Your generosity and dedication fuel our mission and inspire us to strive for excellence every day. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your continued support and belief in the work we do.

**Together, we are making a difference in the lives of Westchester's children. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Ann Umemoto". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ann Umemoto, *WCA Board President*



## Our Vision

Every child healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges regardless of race or zip code

## Our Mission

To identify children's needs, make those needs known, and see that they are met

## Our Work

We turn data into knowledge, build a shared agenda, and mobilize for change



# 2023 Highlights

123

Attendees at our Annual Advocacy Breakfast



267

Youth reached during civic engagement trainings



100+

attended the Youth Justice Rally



380

Landlord-tenant cases observed via Court Watcher Program



945

Advocacy Alerts Sent



2

Key pieces of legislation passed: Access to Counsel + Clean Slate NY





# 2023 Advocacy Update



## ISSUES

## SUMMARY

## ACTION

### *Child Poverty*

Raising awareness and advocating for policies to **alleviate child poverty** are essential for ensuring every child has access to necessities and opportunities.

WCA as member of **Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council** advanced policies on housing, tax policy, employment/wages, and public benefits to support low-income households.

### *Child & Youth Homelessness*

Unstable housing and homelessness put Westchester's children at risk of developmental delays and health issues, making it crucial to connect families to resources **that ensure housing safety and stability.**

WCA launched a court-watching program to understand eviction proceedings and guide our advocacy efforts to prevent homelessness. Successfully advocated for county passage of **"Right to Counsel"**.

### *Early Childhood Support*

Investing in **early childhood support** is essential for lifelong health and success, laying the foundation for growth and school readiness.

WCA was sought after to convene first-ever Head Start workgroup to identify challenges in local programs, including space logistics, declining enrollment barriers and staffing issues.



# 2023 Advocacy Update

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### Youth Well-Being

**Promoting youth well-being** is central to WCA's mission, with research linking healthy emotional development to lifelong cognitive and social skills.

WCA hosted our inaugural **Commissioners' Conversation** to hear county government leaders discuss how their departments are improving outcomes for Westchester's children.

### Youth Justice

**Advocating for youth justice and investing in preventative measures** supports fair treatment, reduces recidivism, and fosters safer communities.

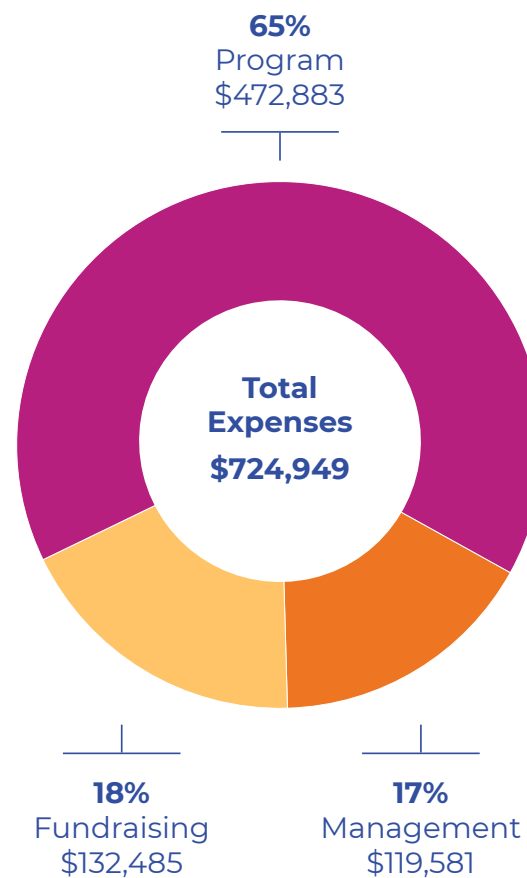
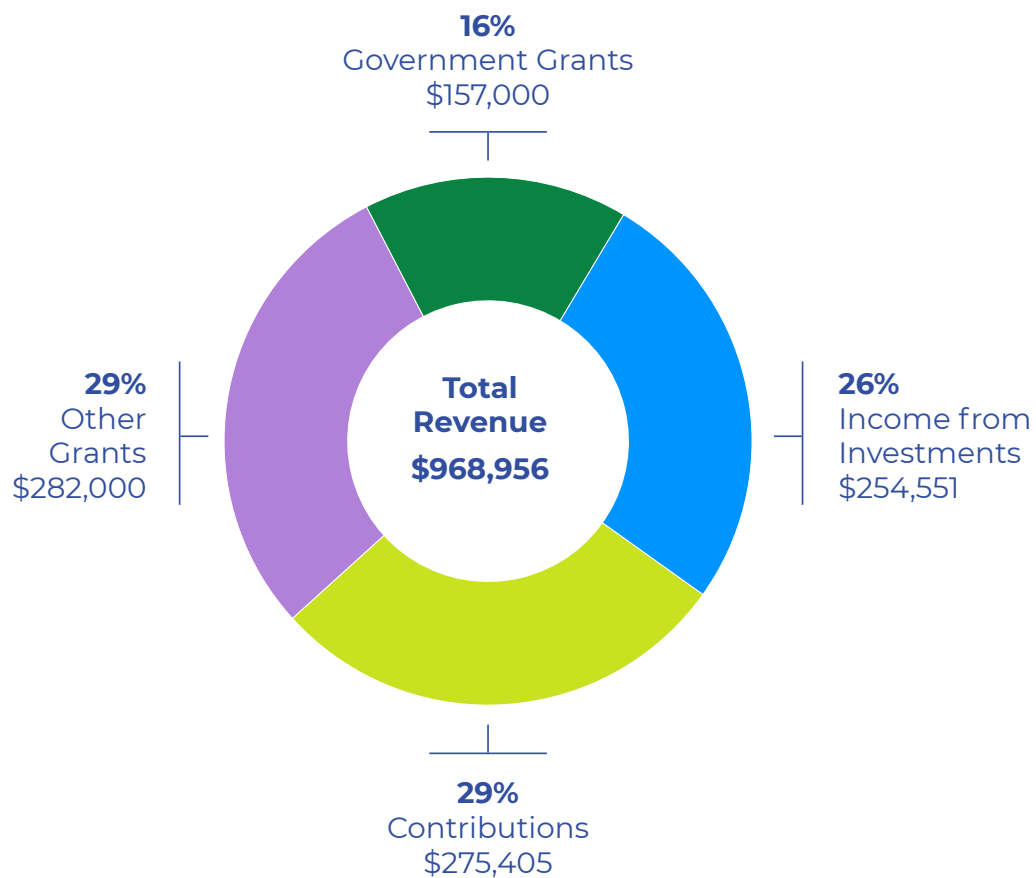
WCA's **Make Some Noise Youth Justice Rally** educated attendees on pending NY State bills aimed at disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline and reducing criminal justice contact.

## KEEP UP TO DATE ON ISSUES

Sign up for emails by completing the form at [wca4kids.org/subscribe](https://wca4kids.org/subscribe)

# 2023 Financial Profile

In 2023, WCA experienced an increase in net assets in the amount of \$244,007. As of December 31, 2023, WCA had net assets (assets minus liabilities) of \$2,363,618 and unrestricted net assets of \$599,988.



A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available on the WCA website [wca4kids.org](http://wca4kids.org). It may also be requested from WCA or the New York State Attorney General, Office of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. Go to [wca4kids.org/about-wca/financials/](http://wca4kids.org/about-wca/financials/)



# Thank you to our generous donors!

We are deeply grateful to all our donors who make our work possible.

Special thanks to those who are enrolled in our monthly giving program:

## **Defenders for Children.**

If you would like to learn more about how you can become a defender for children, contact us at [wca@wca4kids.org](mailto:wca@wca4kids.org) or 914.946.7676.

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2023  
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BREAKFAST



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## YOUTH JUSTICE RALLY



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**WESTCHESTER  
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**Let's work together to help  
 Westchester's children thrive!**

**Give monthly and become a  
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## THE COMEUPPANCE



## PASSAGE OF THE ACCESS TO COUNSEL LEGISLATION





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Children's Champions Since 1914

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### STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up to date on issues affecting Westchester's children and youth, by completing the form at [wca4kids.org/subscribe](https://wca4kids.org/subscribe)



### SPREAD THE WORD

When you share social media posts, forward a petition to friends, or invite someone to a WCA event, you're helping us make sure that our children's needs are met. Tag us [@wca4kids](https://twitter.com/wca4kids).

## WESTCHESTER CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

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(Lists of Board of Directors and Staff as of Sept 2024)