



ASSOCIATION FOR
CHILDREN'S
MENTAL HEALTH

Hope for Families, Shaped by Lived Experience



Community Impact Report

FY 2023 - 2025



Message from the Executive Director

As we reflect on two years of impact at the Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH), I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. This report marks not just a span of time, but a powerful chapter in our ongoing story, one rooted in lived experience, strengthened by community, and driven by a shared belief in the potential of every child and family.

ACMH stands firmly in the belief that families and youth are not just recipients of care. They are experts, leaders, and agents of change. Our staff bring lived experience, whether as family members supporting a loved one or as youth and young adults who have navigated these challenges firsthand.

That belief has guided every support call we answer, every training we deliver, and every partnership we build.

Over the past two years, we've faced evolving challenges and embraced new opportunities. We've expanded our programs, strengthened our partnerships, and elevated family and youth voices in critical conversations across Michigan. Through it all, our mission has remained clear: to walk alongside families and ensure that no child, youth, or caregiver feels alone.

To our dedicated staff, Board of Directors, community partners, and, most importantly, the families and youth who trust us to share this journey: thank you. Your stories fuel our purpose, and your courage lights the way forward.

Here's to continuing this work together, with hope, strength, and a shared commitment to what's possible.

With gratitude,



Carla Pretto, Executive Director, ACMH



Who We Are

OUR MISSION

To support and empower Michigan families and youth with mental health challenges through advocacy, education, and partnership, ensuring they are heard, valued, and equipped to thrive in their homes, schools, and communities.

WHY WE DO THIS WORK

Since 1989, ACMH has been a trusted voice for families and youth navigating the children's mental health system in Michigan. Our work is rooted in lived experience, and our commitment is grounded in the belief that systems work best when shaped by the people they are designed to serve.

Today, we continue to walk beside families and youth, listening, advocating, and leading change. Every step forward reflects decades of courage, resilience, and collective impact.

OUR PURPOSE

We exist to:

- Empower families and youth through knowledge, connection, and advocacy.
- Ensure lived experience drives change across mental health systems.
- Build inclusive communities where mental health is understood, supported, and prioritized.

*"Hope for
families,
shaped by
lived
experience"*

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What We Do

At the Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH), we are dedicated to ensuring that children and youth with mental health challenges—and their families—have access to the support, resources, and advocacy they need to thrive.

Our services are grounded in a family-driven, youth-guided approach and include:

Youth Leadership and Empowerment

ACMH fosters youth voice through leadership development opportunities, youth advisory groups, and events that help young people build skills, confidence, and a sense of community.

Family Training and Education

We offer training, workshops, and webinars to empower families with knowledge about mental health, school supports, community resources, and their rights. Our goal is to help families advocate effectively and build strong partnerships with service providers.

Peer Support Services

ACMH provides direct support to parents, caregivers, and youth through trained Parent Support Partners (PSPs) and Youth Peer Support Specialists (YPSSs). These individuals use their lived experience to offer guidance, validation, and practical tools to help others navigate mental health systems, build resilience, and feel less alone.

Systems Advocacy and Collaboration

We work across state and local systems to promote policies and practices that center family and youth voice, advance equity, and improve access to quality mental health services.

Information and Resource Navigation

Families can reach out to ACMH for individualized help finding resources, understanding service options, and getting connected to appropriate supports in their communities.

Together, our services aim to reduce stigma, strengthen families, uplift youth voice, and create meaningful change across Michigan's mental health landscape.

Involving Youth and Families

2023 - 2025



Youth Leadership Development



ACMH invests in skill-building and relationship-based development to grow sustainable youth leadership. We began by asking youth what they need, and then we responded together.

When youth shared that transportation was a major barrier, we reimagined our approach. Instead of one statewide camp, we launched a regional Youth Leadership Camp so youth could participate without the stress of long travel. Eight youth attended, guided by three Youth Peer Support Specialists who facilitated a day of trust-building, teamwork, and self-expression.

Building on that momentum, our Youth Advisory Council facilitated a three-part virtual Youth Leadership Camp in 2025 over the summer months, giving even more youth the opportunity to engage, connect, and strengthen their leadership skills from home. The council has also created brochures on mental health and academic stress, shared them with peers at the Novi Library, and produced memes and PSA materials for our social media channels to reach youth virtually.

Beyond these programs, we supported Youth Peer Support Specialists as key stakeholders at the policy table, helping shape initiatives through MC3, SAMHSA, and other statewide collaborations. Their lived experience is not only heard—it is actively guiding systems change.



Transition-Aged Supports & Trainings

Key Projects & Activities

ACMH has developed creative tools and training experiences to support transition-aged youth and young adults (TAY), as well as the families and professionals who walk alongside them. These offerings were designed to uplift youth voice, promote self-advocacy, and help build stronger, more empathetic support systems.

Transition Age Checklist

Co-developed with the National Family Support Technical Assistance Center, this checklist supports families in navigating the complex and often overwhelming process of transitioning into adulthood.

Experiential Webinar: Bridging the Gap

In partnership with MDHHS and MPH, ACMH hosted a unique virtual training that brought youth and young adult voice to the forefront of transition-age services.

The webinar featured rotating breakout rooms focused on creative writing, visual arts, and theater, allowing participants to reconnect with their own transition-aged experiences. This hands-on, experiential approach deepened empathy and helped professionals build more authentic, relationship-centered support systems. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive.



Youth Voice Video - "Adulting" from Real Experience:

Produced a powerful video featuring transition-aged youth and young adults sharing lived experiences of stepping into adulthood. Their stories highlighted the challenges and victories of advocating for oneself, offering relatable advice and encouragement for peers on their own journey.

Impact

- Elevated youth voice through storytelling, art, and lived experience.
- Provided professionals with experiential tools to strengthen empathy and connection with the youth they serve.
- Offered families a practical and accessible resource to support transition planning.
- Increased understanding of the emotional and systemic challenges transition-aged youth face, helping shift the approach from task-based to relationship-centered.

Parent Leadership Development

ACMH helps families grow as leaders through skill-building and strong, supportive relationships.

- **Parent Leader Development:**

- Facilitated peer-led sessions with MAF on school navigation and mental health system advocacy
- Delivered virtual (add details) workshops to help parents become system influencers

- **Parent Leadership Contributions:**

- A PAC member was hired by MDHHS to inform trauma-informed crisis systems.
- PAC art initiative and PAC Member Page deepened family engagement and visibility.
- Crisis Toolkit input
- Webinar Series content
- PAC table at conferences
- PAC governance structure and foundational documents



Impact

ACMH's parent leadership initiatives have strengthened family voice and influence across Michigan, transforming parents from advocates for their own children into leaders shaping systems and policy. Families are more connected, confident, and engaged—driving meaningful change through shared learning, collaboration, and lived experience.

Community Engagement & Awareness Campaigns

ACMH drives public understanding and systems visibility through creative, collaborative events and campaigns.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Days:

- **2023:** Featured Rep. Noah Arbit and suicide prevention discussions.
- **2024:** "You Don't Have to Stay in the Dark" theme emphasizing accessibility, stigma reduction, and healing.
- Over 150 attendees per event, co-led by PAC and YAC members and included breakout discussions, advocacy resource distribution, and lived-experience storytelling.

Public Awareness Campaigns

- Partnered with a northern Michigan flower farm to distribute mental health awareness cards with QR links to new parent/caregiver resource hub.

Community Resource Collaboration

- Worked with Lansing Public Schools in collaboration with Harvard Government Performance Lab, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and Michigan Department of Education to gather input from youth and for use in updating ACMH Support Group Toolkits, moving from passive resource sharing to active, facilitated engagement.

Impact:

- Elevated visibility of mental health supports in schools and communities.
- Modeled co-created public engagement rooted in lived experience.



Community-Based Training & Outreach:



Partnering with Michigan Alliance for Families

A cornerstone of ACMH's outreach is its collaboration with Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF) to deliver accessible, high-quality virtual trainings for families and professionals across Michigan. Through this partnership, ACMH hosted a series of engaging webinars during the 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 school years, reaching more than 175 participants statewide and empowering them with knowledge and tools to better support children's mental health and educational success.



These sessions were designed to support families navigating mental health needs within the school system—offering strategies, tools, and encouragement at every step of the journey.

Featured Webinar Topics:

- **Supporting Student Mental Health:** Prioritizing Mental Health at Home and School
- **Supporting the Educational Needs of Children & Youth with Mental Health Challenges & Trauma**
- **School Avoidance & School Refusal:** Solving the Puzzle Takes a Team Approach
- **Navigating Mental Health as Students Return to School**

Looking ahead to 2025–2026, ACMH is excited to continue this valued partnership, offering repeat sessions and exploring additional topics based on family needs and feedback.

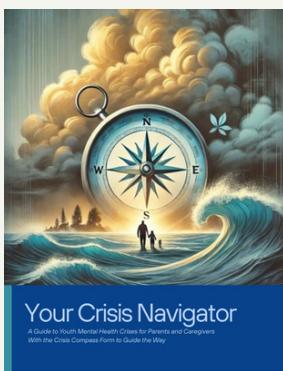
"This session was incredibly helpful and exactly what I needed. Our family has faced significant challenges over the past few years, and now that things are more stable, I'm ready to support others and help strengthen our community. This training gave me the tools and inspiration to do that. Thank you!"

"Thank you so much for the helpful information you shared this year with families and professionals across Michigan, it truly makes a difference... You have received great feedback from attendees and over 175 people attended the ACMH presentations through Michigan Alliance for Families in the 2024–25 school year."

Navigating Crisis with Confidence: The Crisis Toolkit Story

Every family hopes they will never face a mental health crisis with their child, but when the unexpected happens, having the right tools can make all the difference.

This year, ACMH took a bold step forward by developing the Crisis Toolkit, a pair of resources designed to prepare families, youth, caregivers, and providers before, during, and after a mental health crisis. Rooted in family voice and supported by strong partnerships, the Toolkit is built around two key tools:



Crisis Navigator: a comprehensive guide that equips families and providers with prevention strategies, de-escalation techniques, and post-crisis recovery resources.



Crisis Compass: a youth crisis information sheet that allows parents and caregivers to capture vital details about their child's needs, medications, and supports. In an emergency, the Compass ensures first responders and hospital staff receive accurate, life-saving information, fast.

Built on Listening

The Toolkit reflects what families told us they needed most: clear crisis plans, alternatives to the ER, and ways to privately share sensitive information with first responders. Parents and youth across Michigan, alongside law enforcement and emergency room staff, helped shape the design. Their voices ensured the Toolkit is practical, trauma-informed, and family-driven.

In Collaboration with MDHHS

The ACMH Crisis Toolkit empowers families and professionals to respond to youth mental health crises with clarity and compassion. Developed with MDHHS and grounded in lived experience, it strengthens early intervention, communication, and coordinated support across Michigan.



Social Media Reach & Engagement

ACMH's social media platforms play a vital role in connecting families, youth, and professionals with trusted information, timely updates, and opportunities to engage. Through Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube, we share accessible resources, promote awareness events, and highlight statewide efforts to support children's mental health. Growth across these channels reflects our commitment to meeting families where they are and expanding access to reliable, stigma-reducing information that fosters understanding and connection across Michigan.

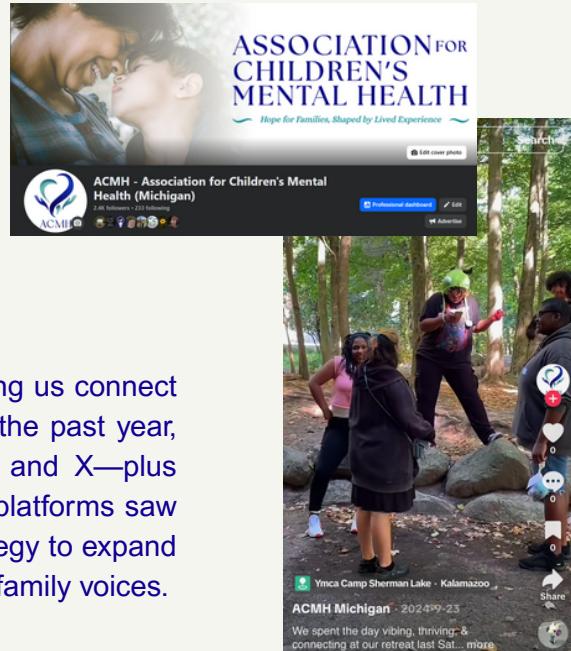
ACMH's digital outreach continues to grow rapidly, helping us connect more families and professionals across Michigan. Over the past year, we published 361 posts across Facebook, Instagram, and X—plus additional video content on TikTok and YouTube. Some platforms saw more than 1,600% growth, reflecting our intentional strategy to expand outreach, share timely resources, and amplify youth and family voices.

social media posts published across Facebook, Instagram, and X

361

1,600%

increase in platform activity since 2023



1,927 combined views on TikTok and YouTube videos

5+ social platforms used to amplify youth/family voice & mental health awareness

Our growing social media presence helps ACMH reach more families and professionals with information that matters. Across platforms, engagement continues to rise—showing how digital spaces can strengthen awareness, connection, and support for children's mental health statewide.

Peer Support for Youth and Families

2023 - 2025



Empowering Families and Youth Through Evidence-Based Peer Support

In partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, ACMH coordinates Michigan's peer support workforce for youth and families impacted by serious emotional disturbance (SED) and serious mental illness (SMI). Peers are employed by Community Mental Health (CMH) agencies statewide, and ACMH provides training, certification, and ongoing support to strengthen and sustain these evidence-based roles.

♥ What Is a Peer?

A peer is someone who's been there — who knows what it's like to navigate the system, ask hard questions, and keep hoping for healing. They use their lived experience to walk beside youth and families, offering understanding, encouragement, and proof that recovery and resilience are possible.

Statewide Peer Workforce Impact (Cumulative as of October 2025)

Parent Support Partners (PSP)	Youth Peer Support Specialists (YPSS)
57 Cohorts Trained	37 Cohorts Trained
114 PSPs currently working in Michigan	57 YPSS currently working in Michigan

Driving Systems Change Through Collaboration and Innovation

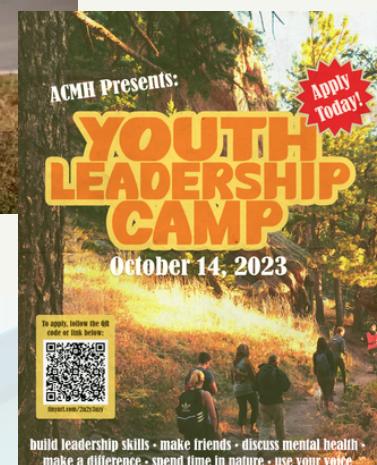
- Collaboration & Systems Influence:** Both YPS and PSP specialists contribute to statewide initiatives, policy discussions, and system redesign efforts, helping embed family-driven, youth-guided principles into Michigan's behavioral health landscape.
- Innovative Training Approaches:** Incorporation of YPSS and PSP expertise in training content and facilitation fosters authentic peer learning and shared leadership across the workforce.
- Responsive Growth:** New funding and program enhancements are enabling ACMH to meet increasing demand and expand training frequency, improving access and engagement for youth and families statewide.

Youth Peer Support

What makes the Youth Peer Support Specialist (YPSS) role so unique is its foundation in shared experience. Unlike traditional providers, YPSSs connect with youth not as clinicians or case managers, but as equals, young adults who have been there. They bring authenticity, relatability, and hope to every conversation, helping youth feel safe opening up about their struggles. Their lived experience transforms into a bridge between youth and professionals, ensuring that services are youth-guided, strengths-based, and grounded in real understanding.

Leadership & Advocacy

- 5 YPSSs and 4 supervisors serve on the ACMH Joint Advisory Committee.
- YPSSs are active stakeholders in statewide initiatives, including MC3 and the SAMHSA Black Youth Suicide Policy Academy.
- A YPSS presented at our annual Youth Mental Health Action Day event (YMHAD) Lunch Panel, sharing lived experience and professional expertise.
- YPSSs co-facilitated Youth Leadership Camps and contributed to statewide research on peer support specialist needs, barriers, and retention, with results forthcoming.
- One YPSS contributed to data collection on peer support specialist needs, barriers, retention, and demographics; results are forthcoming for publication.



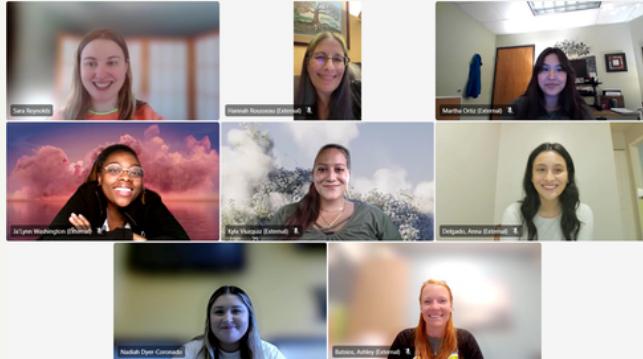
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



build leadership skills • make friends • discuss mental health • make a difference • spend time in nature • use your voice

Youth Peer Support Highlights

- Provided technical assistance and training to support YPS program development in Hawaii and North Carolina; Hawaii delegates visited Michigan to learn from our model.
- Evolved training to engage learners through multiple modalities tailored to diverse learning styles.
- Delivered 4 cohort trainings, 40 peer mentor calls, 12 professional development meetings, and 4 supervisor trainings/roundtables in FY24.



Incorporating YPSS Expertise & Mentorship

- Created training videos led by experienced YPSSs covering key topics, integrated into every Professional Development Meeting.
- Three certified YPSSs provide guidance during peer mentor calls.
- A YPSS and PSP co-facilitated joint Professional Development Meetings at the 2025 YMHADE event.

♥ Two-Fold Impact of Youth Peer Support

The Youth Peer Support program creates change on two levels, for the youth receiving support and for the peers providing it. Youth gain hope, connection, and a sense of belonging, while Peer Support Specialists grow as leaders, using their lived experience to guide others and shape systems of care. Together, they're building a stronger, more compassionate network of support across Michigan.

Parent Support Partners: Families Helping Families

Parent Support Partners (PSPs) bring the voice of lived experience into Michigan's behavioral health system. Each PSP is a parent or primary caregiver who has navigated the challenges of raising a child with serious emotional disturbance (SED) or developmental disabilities, including autism. They use that firsthand understanding to support, educate, and empower other parents and caregivers, offering practical guidance, empathy, and hope. By partnering with families through Community Mental Health (CMH) agencies across the state, PSPs help ensure that parents never have to face their journey alone.

Highlights

- 115 PSPs provide services to families statewide.
- Delivered 4 cohort trainings, 35 peer mentoring calls, 20 professional development meetings, and 4 supervisor trainings/roundtables in FY24.
- Updated training processes to improve effectiveness and responsiveness to family needs.



Parent Support Partner Leadership & Advocacy

- 4 PSPs and 4 supervisors serve on the ACMH Joint Advisory Committee.
- PSP feedback informs ongoing updates to training processes and protocols to support diverse adult learning styles.
- PSPs hold parent leadership roles on local and state committees, elevating the parent voice.
- Multiple PSPs serve as State of Michigan-contracted trainers, facilitating Trauma-Informed Parenting sessions.

Parent Support Partner Certification Model

Parent Support Partners (PSPs) complete a comprehensive certification process.

Training covers family-driven and youth-guided care, cultural competency, confidentiality, professional boundaries, SMART goals, and collaboration within child- and family-serving systems.

Each PSP is supervised by a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) at their Community Mental Health (CMH) agency, who provides clinical guidance, ensures integration within treatment teams, and supports alignment with family treatment goals.

Incorporating PSP Expertise & Mentorship

PSPs...

...actively mentor peers and participate in professional development, enhancing leadership capacity.

...co-facilitate trainings and professional development sessions alongside ACMH staff, fostering shared leadership.



One PSP's story was spotlighted at the All Hands on Deck Professional Development Meeting.

“It’s all hands on deck—every voice, every skill, every perspective matters when we work together toward a common goal.”

Overall Impact of ACMH Peer Program Statewide

- **Expanded Access:** Over 784 unduplicated individuals served and trained to date (both YPS & PSP in FY24), increasing availability of peer support services across Michigan.
- **Empowerment & Leadership:** Youth and parents are empowered to share their lived experience, build confidence, and actively participate in service planning and decision-making.
- **Enhanced Training & Support:** Ongoing professional development, peer mentorship, and leadership opportunities have strengthened the skills and resilience of both Youth Peer Support Specialists (YPSSs) and Parent Support Partners (PSPs).

Crisis Support Partner

Michigan's Crisis Peer Support (CSP) model, developed in partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, offers specialized peer support services for parents and caregivers navigating their child's mental health crisis. ACMH serves as the statewide coordinator and training partner, providing certification, training, and ongoing support to Crisis Peer Support Partners (CSPs).

Drawing on lived experience, CSPs deliver compassionate, trauma-informed, real-time support that reduces isolation and stigma, helping families navigate complex mental health systems, access resources, and build resilience during crisis. This peer-led approach fosters hope, trust, and self-advocacy, empowering families to make informed decisions and regain stability.



Training & Development

- Currently developing tailored training protocols specific to crisis navigation, trauma-informed care, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Ongoing collaboration with caregivers, law enforcement, and mental health providers to ensure training reflects real-world challenges and best practices.
- Building a sustainable support network for CSPs, including mentorship and continuous professional development opportunities.

Impact & Next Steps

- Successfully laid foundational partnerships and frameworks to launch the CSP program statewide.
- Positioned CSPs as trusted allies who bridge gaps between families and crisis services, contributing to a more responsive and family-driven behavioral health system.
- Preparing to initiate statewide recruitment and training cohorts in the coming fiscal year, aiming to expand access to peer-led crisis support for families across Michigan.
- Anticipate positive impacts on family engagement, crisis stabilization, and overall mental health outcomes through this innovative service model.

Systems Transformation

2023 - 2025



Systems Change & Policy Leadership

ACMH serves as a catalyst for systems change in Michigan's children's behavioral health landscape. Our policy, advocacy, and partnership efforts ensure that youth and families with lived experience move from being voices at the table to decision-makers shaping the table itself.

Key Highlights:

- Co-authored the Michigan Youth Mental Health Awareness Day Proclamation (2023 & 2024), signed by Governor Whitmer.
- Influenced the development of Youth Crisis Stabilization Units (YCSUs) and the Crisis Support Peer role.
- PAC and YAC members consulted on the Title V Needs Assessment, trauma-informed care models, and system redesign efforts.
- Provided leadership and feedback on the Crisis Navigator Toolkit and Transition Age Checklist.



Impact

- Positioned lived experience as a driving force behind real-time systems reform.
- Helped bridge policy, service delivery, and direct advocacy for more equitable, responsive care.

Policy, Systems & Leadership: Centering Lived Experience to Drive Change

Training Systems to Serve Families Better

- Delivered trainings embedding Family-Driven/Youth-Guided (FD/YG) principles in crisis response, peer support, and culturally responsive care.
- Supported peer role integration with technical assistance and shared leadership models.
- Developed the Crisis Navigator Toolkit with input from caregivers, youth, and professionals.
- Positioned families and youth as decision-makers, not just informants.

Policy Leadership in Michigan

- Engaged legislators and agency leaders to center lived experience in reforms.
- Informed policy on youth crisis redesign, mobile crisis services, and peer support integration.
- Maintained long-standing leadership in shaping Michigan's mental health system.

National Leadership & System Redesign

- Contributed to SAMHSA's Statewide Family Network, suicide prevention policy, and equity-focused initiatives.
- Advised states including Hawaii and North Carolina on youth peer support development.
- Partnered with institutions such as Harvard Government Performance Lab, NFF, and NFSTAC to co-develop tools and strategies.
- Co-developed and piloted Michigan's Crisis Peer Support role.
- Trained providers on FD/YG care in schools and CMHs.
- Collaborated with universities on research-to-practice models.

Collaborations Across Michigan

- Partnered with MDHHS, CMHA, MDE, MAF, and MC3.
- Served on advisory boards and planning bodies for school-based mental health, crisis continuum design, and equity in peer support.



Impact

- Strengthened FD/YG integration across multiple systems.
- Elevated youth and families as leaders in decision-making.
- Reinforced ACMH's role as a trusted systems-change leader.
- Expanded youth/family voice in cross-agency planning.
- Advanced national conversations on family leadership and equity.
- Helped redesign crisis systems with shared leadership at the core.



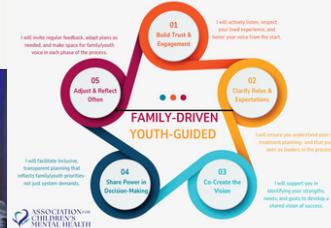
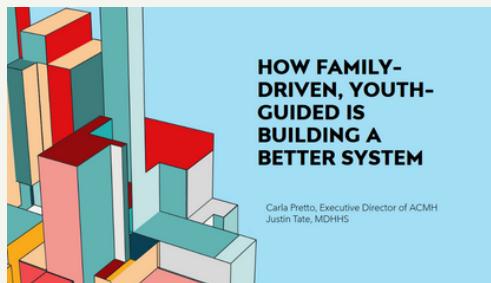
Family-Driven, Youth-Guided Leadership

Shaping Systems Through Family and Youth Voice

ACMH continues to champion Family-Driven, Youth-Guided (FD/YG) philosophy and practice as a cornerstone of Michigan's children's mental health system. Our objectives reflect a strong commitment to ensuring families and youth are not only included but centered in decision-making, policy, and service design.

Objectives

1. Inform System Change Efforts
2. Partner with MDHHS, CMH/PIHPs, providers, and policymakers to ensure FD/YG philosophy drives system-level change.
3. Promote and Co-Lead FD/YG Implementation
4. From our position within the Bureau of Children's Coordinated Health Policy Services and Supports, guide efforts to expand awareness, knowledge, and implementation of FD/YG practices.
5. Support a Full Continuum of Peer-Delivered Services
6. Advance FD/YG-based peer services by researching needs, creating training materials, and supporting providers and peer specialists across Michigan.



Community Impact

- Elevated Family and Youth Voice: Ensured FD/YG remained a visible, guiding standard for providers, partners, and policymakers.
- Strengthened Partnerships: Collaborated with Parent Advisory Committees (PACs) and community partners to reinforce the importance of lived experience at every decision-making table.
- Built Foundations for Peer Support: Positioned ACMH to further develop training, technical assistance, and materials to strengthen the peer provider workforce.

Funding Note

While project funding concluded in Q3 FY25, ACMH continues to carry this work forward through our broader initiatives. The foundation laid through these objectives ensures that FD/YG remains a driving force in policy and practice across Michigan's mental health systems.

Expanding Access & Reducing Barriers

At ACMH, removing barriers isn't a project — it's a mindset. It shapes every decision we make and every event we design. We ask ourselves constantly: Who might be left out, and how can we bring them in?

Over the years, that question guided some of our most meaningful shifts.

When caregivers told us that travel costs made it hard to attend trainings, we partnered with the **Family Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs** so families could access statewide conference scholarships. When parents shared that getting their teens to leadership opportunities was a challenge, we stepped in and **covered lodging and transportation** so youth could attend camp without worry.

And when families across Michigan said they wanted to participate but couldn't always get away from work or home responsibilities, we listened. We **brought our Parent Leadership Camp and Youth Leadership Camp online**, hosted through Eventbrite, allowing families from every corner of the state to log in and be part of the experience. We also added a **virtual component to our conferences** so no one had to choose between showing up for their family and showing up for their own growth.

Even our communications evolved. By launching the **ACMH LinkedIn** page and expanding our social media presence, we made it easier for families, partners, and community leaders to find us, learn from us, and connect with us.

And the response has been clear: families and partners told us—again and again—how much they appreciated being seen, heard, and included in ways that felt practical and meaningful.

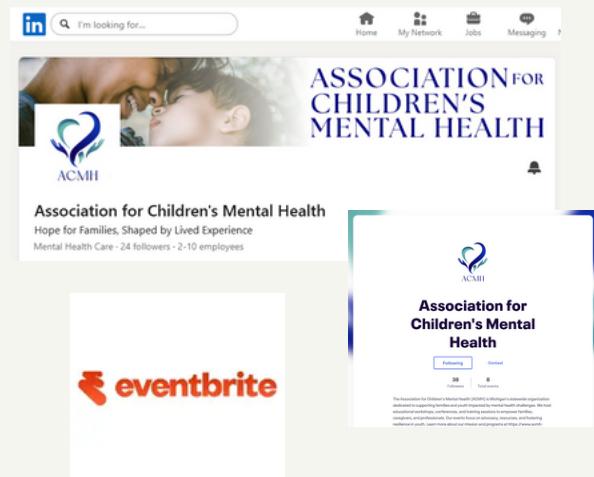
Impact

Because of these changes, more families than ever were able to participate in leadership, training, and engagement opportunities.

We reduced long-standing barriers tied to transportation, cost, time, and trust, and strengthened the participation of caregivers and youth who have historically been underrepresented in statewide work.

In short:

When we remove barriers, doors open — and families walk through them.



Operations and Sustainability

2023 - 2025



Investing in People & Culture

At ACMH, our greatest strength lies in our people — their compassion, creativity, and lived experience. This year, we deepened our investment in staff growth and collaboration to build a culture where everyone can thrive.

Empowering Our Team

- Launched weekly **Coffee Chats** and **Team TA Hours** to foster connection, peer learning, and real-time problem solving.
- Implemented a **formal performance evaluation process** for clarity, accountability, and growth.
- Created a **Communications Team** to refine branding, streamline messaging, and amplify lived experience, strengthening ACMH's voice statewide.
- Updated our **strategic plan** to align with current capacity and evolving needs.



The image shows a screenshot of the ACMH Employee Performance Evaluation Form. The form is a table with several sections. At the top, it has fields for 'Employee Information' (Employee Name: [redacted], Supervisor Name: [redacted], Department: [redacted]) and 'Performance Period' (Performance Period: [redacted]). Below this is a section titled 'Core Values - How I Behaved' with a list of behaviors (e.g., Quality of Work, Integrity, Accountability, etc.) and checkboxes for 'None', 'Some', or 'Much' improvement. There are also sections for 'Management & Knowledge' (e.g., Knowledge of job requirements, Knowledge of other people's job requirements, Knowledge of other areas of the organization, etc.) and 'Communication Skills' (e.g., Communicates clearly and effectively, Listens well, etc.). The form is mostly in grayscale with some color for the checkboxes and the ACMH logo.



Modernizing How We Work

We continued building a digital-first foundation to make our work smarter, faster, and more connected.

- Expanded use of **Microsoft 365 tools** — including Teams, SharePoint, and Forms — to improve collaboration and project tracking.
- Introduced **standardized templates and systems** to streamline data, reduce duplication, and support efficient reporting.
- **Rebranded ACMH** with updated messaging, logos, and digital assets that better reflect our mission and impact.



Sustainable Systems Development

Behind every great mission is a strong foundation. ACMH recently strengthened its infrastructure to ensure long-term success.

- More recently, ACMH welcomed a **new Executive Director** and key staff to expand capacity and stabilize operations.
- Established an **Executive Leadership Team** to guide decision-making and strategic direction.
- Updated **hiring practices** to prioritize lived experience and cultural competence.

Expanding Visibility & Statewide Leadership

This year, ACMH amplified its voice — sharing Michigan's family and youth perspectives in spaces that shape systems, policies, and practices across the state and nation.

Extending Our Reach

Our team proudly represented ACMH and Michigan families at leading state and national events, including:

- **SAMHSA National Grantee Conference** — highlighting collaborative innovation in family-driven care.
- **CMHA Fall Conference** — where ACMH helped close the event as keynote presenters.
- **National Federation of Families sessions** — sharing lessons from the field on partnership and advocacy.
- **ARC Michigan and MAF trainings** — building bridges between advocates, educators, and families.

Leading Through Lived Experience

Our staff contributed real-world expertise to statewide workgroups focused on:

- **Youth crisis redesign (YCSUs)** — shaping more responsive and compassionate crisis systems.
- **Peer support role development** — defining and expanding opportunities for parent and youth peers.
- **Behavioral health integration policy** — ensuring families' voices influence system transformation.

Building Connection and Visibility

- Boosted social media engagement through authentic, PAC- and YAC-informed storytelling.
- Began redesigning our website to enhance accessibility and make resources easier to find.
- Shared stories that uplift youth, caregivers, and community partners — increasing recognition of ACMH's leadership statewide.

Outcomes & Impact

- **Unified Vision:** Greater staff alignment, communication, and morale through a season of transition.
- **Resilient Systems:** Increased consistency and adaptability across programs.
- **Statewide Recognition:** Solidified ACMH's reputation as a trusted leader in family-driven, youth-guided care.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Established a strong foundation for expansion and innovation in 2026 and beyond.

Financial Overview

As a nonprofit organization committed to transparency and accountability, ACMH is proud to share a high-level overview of its financial health and stewardship over the past two fiscal years. We remain deeply committed to using every dollar strategically to expand our impact, support families and youth, and strengthen Michigan's mental health systems.

2023

OPERATING REVENUE		OPERATING EXPENSES	
Contributions	\$8534	Programs	\$740,657
State Contracts	\$410,000	Administration	\$68,308
Federal Grants	\$842,999	Total Expenses	\$808,965
Total Revenue	\$1,261,533		

2024

OPERATING REVENUE		OPERATING EXPENSES	
Contributions	\$8534	Programs	\$740,657
State Contracts	\$410,000	Administration	\$68,308
Federal Grants	\$842,999	Total Expenses	\$808,965
Total Revenue	\$1,261,533		

Interpretation

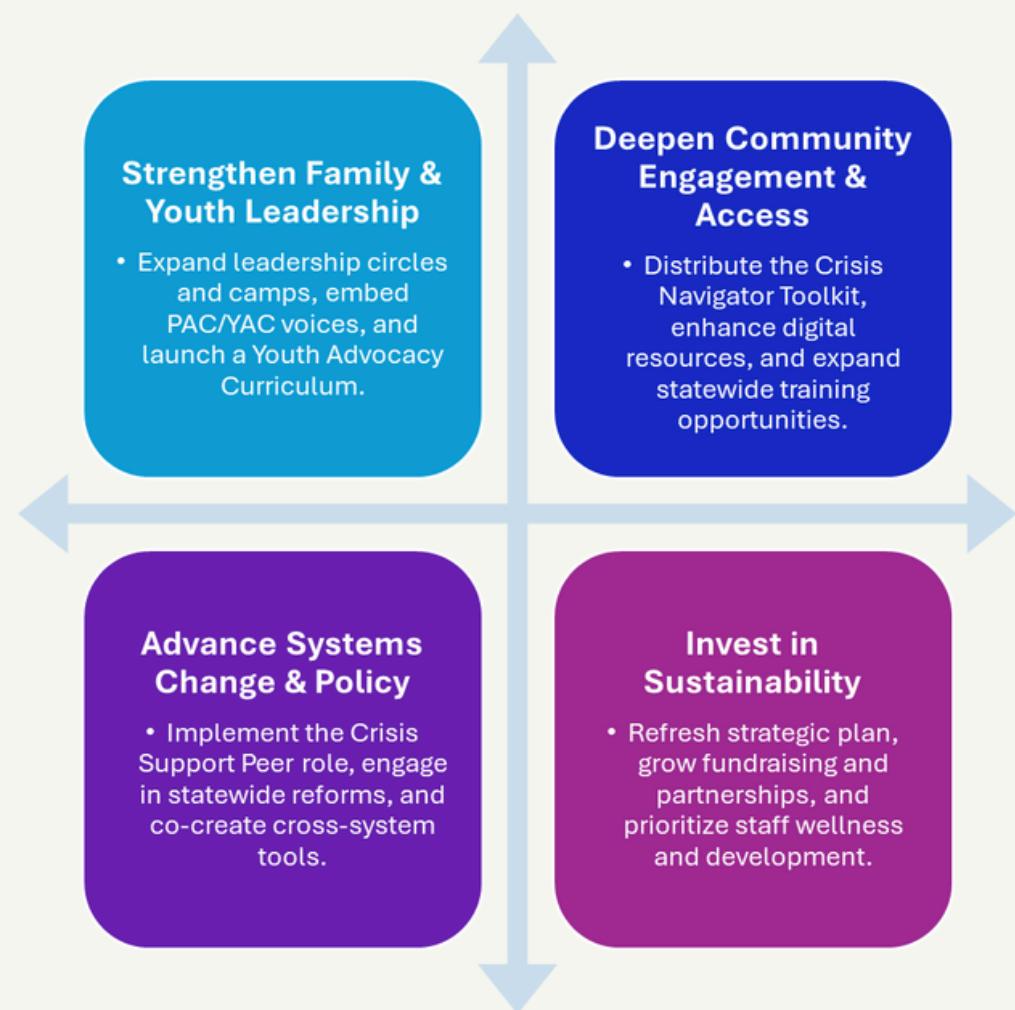
Most of ACMH's funding comes from government sources, reflecting strong partnerships and our vital role in children's mental health. Nearly 92% of expenses supported direct programs, ensuring families and youth receive the services they need. We are also working to diversify funding through grants, contributions, and investments to build a stronger financial foundation for the future.

92¢ of every dollar goes directly to programs supporting children and families.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Plan & Goals

Building on the foundation of our achievements over the past two years, ACMH enters the new fiscal year with a renewed commitment to sustainability, equity, and leadership development. Our strategic plan reflects what we've heard from youth, families, and partners across Michigan, and sets the direction for our work moving forward.

Strategic Priorities



ACMH will continue to be a bold advocate and trusted resource for families and youth across Michigan. We will stay rooted in lived experience, guided by data and community voice, and committed to advancing equity and excellence in children's mental health.

Strategic Stakeholder Partnerships

Our approach to systems change is rooted in trusted relationships and long-term collaboration. ACMH is recognized across Michigan and nationally as a key partner in building responsive systems of care.

Statewide Engagement:

- Partnered with MDHHS, CMHA, MDE, MC3, and Michigan Alliance for Families.
- Contributed to the CMHA Children's Issues Committee, Great Lakes MHTTC Advisory Board, and crisis planning workgroups.

National Thought Leadership:

- Active in SAMHSA's Statewide Family Network and Black Youth Suicide Policy Academy.
- Consulted with Hawaii and North Carolina to support Youth Peer Support program development.
- Co-presented at national conferences and collaborated with Harvard GPL, University of Michigan, and MSU.

Impact:

- Advanced the Family-Driven, Youth-Guided (FD/YG) philosophy from concept to practice.
- Brought lived experience to the forefront of systems, education, and workforce development.

We are deeply grateful to our incredible sponsors and partners. Your support makes our work possible.



Flinn Foundation
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Washtenaw County Health Department
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And to our individual donors, thank you for your generosity and belief in our mission. Every gift helps us make a difference!

People Behind the Mission

2023 - 2025



Our Leadership & Team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board provides strategic guidance, fiduciary oversight, and a commitment to family and youth voice in every decision.

Robert Pettaway, President

Beverly Schumer, Chair of Finance

Sheila Sears, Chair of Programs

Andria Bronson-John, Secretary

Susie Manser, Board Member

Cheyne Weston, Board Member

ACMH STAFF TEAM

Dedicated to supporting families, youth, and community partners across Michigan.

Executive Leadership

Carla Pretto, Executive Director

Krissy Dristy, Director of Peer Programs

Dianna Robinson, Director of Operations

Mary Porter, Director of Finance

Program, Education & Outreach

Margo Pierce, Parent Support Partner, Statewide Coordinator

Sara Reynolds, Youth Peer Support, Statewide Coordinator

Shawna Kassuba, Education & Outreach Coordinator

Angie Engler, Parent Support Partner, Lead Trainer

Administrative Support

Niki Sturkie, Administrative Assistant

Acknowledgements

The Association for Children's Mental Health extends our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals and partners who made this work possible.

Families & Youth

To the families, caregivers, and young people who share their experiences, wisdom, and leadership, thank you for guiding our mission and reminding us why this work matters every day.

Partners & Collaborators

We are grateful to our statewide and community partners, including MDHHS, CMHA, MDE, MC3, Michigan Alliance for Families, and the many agencies and organizations that walk alongside us to strengthen Michigan's mental health system.

Funders & Supporters

We thank our funders for their investment in children's mental health, including SAMHSA, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Flinn Foundation, and other foundations, sponsors, and donors whose contributions sustain and grow our work.

Staff & Board

To our dedicated staff and board of directors, your passion, resilience, and commitment fuel every achievement highlighted in this report.

We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

Association for Children's Mental Health

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