

Fostering and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion



Summit County
CHILDREN SERVICES

Building Families . . . Building Futures

2021 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Dear Friends,

For more than 140 years, Summit County Children Services (SCCS) has been committed to serving the abused and neglected children in Summit County by promoting their safety, permanency and well-being. In 2021, SCCS served one of every twelve children in Summit County and offered support to thousands of families in crisis. While continuing programs and initiatives to support our essential services, we also focused on planning for the future: a new five-year Strategic Plan was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Valuable feedback and responses were solicited and received from staff, clients and many community stakeholders to create a roadmap for the next five years. The Core Values of our Strategic Plan are as follows and are featured in this Report to the Community: Quality Programs and Services, Quality Workforce, Quality Relationships and Quality Infrastructure. This plan is ambitious, yet attainable over the next five years as it will act as our compass moving forward. In addition, the agency creates annual goals that are linked to the Strategic Plan to make sure we stay “on target.”

Complementing the new Strategic Plan, we have also made a significant commitment to advancing a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through the development of a DEI Action Plan. We had a very successful year in meeting the goals of our DEI plan with the support of an outside consultant, an internal DEI Steering Committee and several very hard-working subcommittees. Some of our accomplishments are outlined in this Annual Report.

We have also planned for a transition to new leadership of the agency. After eight years as the Executive Director of SCCS and 32 years of service in the field of child welfare, I will retire on April 29, 2022. I am proud of my career in social work and grateful to have been part of the legacy of SCCS. With the leadership of the Board of Trustees and the solid clinical and financial position of the agency, we anticipate a smooth transition to the new Executive Director.

On behalf of the entire staff of SCCS, our Board of Trustees and most importantly the children and families served, we are pleased to present our 2021 Report to the Community.



Anne Connell-Freund
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Team

Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW
Executive Director

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Social Services*

Darin Kearns
*Deputy Executive Director,
Fiscal Services / CFO*

Valarie Nash
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Human Resources & Support Services*

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*Deputy Executive Director,
Administrative & Legal Services / General Counsel*

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Pastor Herman Matherson
The House of the Lord

Cecilia O'Donnell
Fostering Independence, Inc.

Jackie Pollard
Summit County Public Health

Sgt. John Ross
Akron Police Department

Women's Auxiliary Board

Jen Thames
President

Service that Counts

During 2021, we provided services to the children and families of Summit County to bring stability and safety to their lives. Our goal is to place children as close as possible to their family home.

7

Average age of children on open cases

83%

Percentage of children reunified with family

695

Monthly average # of families served

82

Total # of finalized adoptions

793

Monthly average # of children in custody

8,920

Total # of Intake calls

9,692

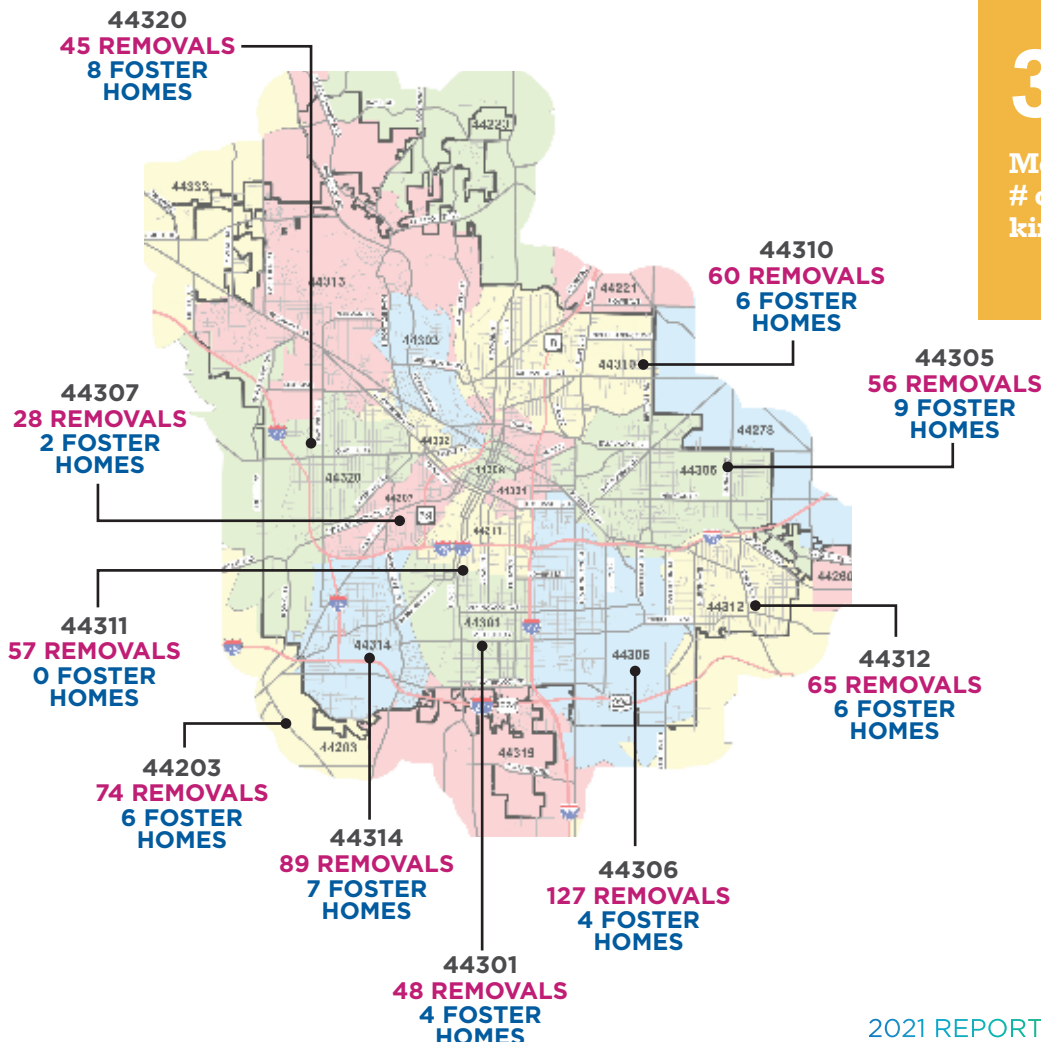
Total # of children who received agency services

301

Monthly average # of children in kinship homes

3,663

of reports assigned for assessment/investigation



Number of removals per top 10 target zip codes and foster homes in each area. This illustration demonstrates the need for more foster homes.



Diversity, equity and inclusion —

Last year, SCCS set out to make DEI a priority in our work. Leadership began by meeting with our black & brown staff to better understand their concerns and desires for the agency. SCCS contracted with a DEI consultant who helped the agency put some structure in place, starting with the creation of a Steering Committee which was comprised of staff from all levels of the agency. The Steering Committee is charged with identifying DEI needs and developing and reviewing implementation plans. A DEI Action Plan was created along with a Working Document that is used to track and update our progress and keep this work at the forefront of what we do.



DEI VALUES STATEMENT:

At SCCS, we believe in creating a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We will cultivate an environment that respects, celebrates and supports the differences of our employees and the people we serve.

Under the DEI Steering Committee, two subcommittees were formed – Training and Human Resources – to examine our processes in each identified area through the lens of DEI.

The Training Subcommittee established procedures to ensure the diversity of both trainers and SCCS trainings were evaluated for inclusive curriculum. With this initiative, the Board of Trustees members and agency staff participated in Microaggression Training. In addition, the training curriculum for Mandated Reporters was updated to assist reporters in understanding the role poverty plays in child welfare concerns.

The Human Resources Subcommittee evaluated all SCCS Leadership Programs to ensure a DEI lens is currently and in the future, used in all aspects of the programs including application, selection and curriculum. The subcommittee also evaluated recruitment and new hire procedures to ensure that diverse populations are eligible for consideration of all agency positions. Additionally, Implicit Bias Training was incorporated into New Employee Orientation (NEO) and the curriculum was evaluated to provide new hires with diverse exposure to agency operations.



Summertime brings numerous opportunities for SCCS to engage with and educate the public about our various programs, services and needs. Pictured are staff at the Akron Pride Festival in August (above) and at the African American Cultural Festival in July (right).

Below are other DEI achievements from 2021:

- Executive Director Julie Barnes served as a member of the Casey Family Programs Metro Counties Race Equity Committee.
- Inclusive gender pronouns were introduced for SCCS staff.
- Expanded the agency's Ambassador Program in Community Relations to ensure SCCS is represented in the community with a diverse presence.
- Designated single staff restrooms as gender-neutral.
- Established a process to evaluate policies and procedures to ensure that DEI language is incorporated.

a priority in our work.



Pride Day with the SCCS staff.

SCCS staff ready to march at Akron Pride



SCCS DEI Steering Committee

Working alongside the DEI Steering Committee is the SCCS Diversity Committee, which works to develop and promote strategies and best practices within the realms of racial, social, sexual and gender diversity.

In 2021, the SCCS Diversity Committee hosted several events and activities:

Media Groups — Staff met virtually and examined cultural topics shared through podcasts, articles and videos.

A virtual scavenger hunt for Black History Month — Staff received weekly emails on specific topics related to Black History as well as information regarding opportunities to observe and celebrate outside the agency.

Akron Pride Celebration on campus — The committee sold t-shirts and donated \$175 to Margie's Hope. A self-guided mini pride walk around campus was held. Committee members made signs with facts about the LGBTQ population to decorate the route. SCCS was a sponsor of the Akron Pride March and Festival and a group of staff participated in the community march and several also staffed an information table during the event.



A Poverty Simulation

A Poverty Simulation —

Staff from across the agency participated in a 90-minute interactive session designed to challenge bias and build empathy for clients and others in poverty. More than 70 staff attended.



What we accomplished in 2021



Leadership Partnerships

SCCS staff member Regan McKinney-Baity was a member of Class 6 of Leadership Akron's Diversity on Board, which provides leadership development, education and board matching services.



New Support Programs

SCCS formed the THRIVE Peer Support program for caseworkers.

Pictured (from left) are the program facilitators, Christen Smith-Misja and Kaley Cooley.



Continued Leadership

The third biannual Leadership Academy Class was selected and began their year of learning and developing valuable leadership skills.

Pictured from left: Salima Dunn, Social Service Programs; Kim Gear, Protective Specialized Services; Lori Groff, Intake Services; Jillian Powlowski, Protective Services; Angela Sellers, Social Service Programs; Katie Masternick, Intake Screening & Supports; Sharon Kuhlke, Protective Services; Hannah Weisgarber, Protective Specialized Services; Christen Smith-Misja, Intake Screening & Supports; Taranna Francisco, Protective Services; Sam Oliverio, Legal Services; and Kaley Cooley, Intake Services.



Ground Breaking Fun

SCCS built a new playground adjacent to the Family Enrichment Area, a new visitation area created from existing space and designed to be a transitional environment for families who are almost ready to begin community or home visitation.

Pictured is Executive Director Julie Barnes speaking at the dedication with members of the agency's Executive Team in the background.



PCSAO Winners!

Tyleq, a youth in the permanent custody of SCCS, was presented with a Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Rising Up and Moving On Award. Pictured (at right) is Tyleq giving remarks as he accepts the award.



SCCS Maintenance worker, Johnny Garza, was presented with the PCSAO Support Staff of the Year award.

Pictured (from left): Executive Director Julie Barnes, Johnny Garza, Linda McMahon, Department Director, Facilities Management, and Joe Cush, Supervisor, Maintenance.



Developing New Leaders

Congratulations to the Leading in Excellence and Professionalism (LEAP) Class II participants who graduated July 26. This program was developed to help staff learn advanced practice skills to prepare them for future leadership opportunities.

Pictured (from left): Nicole Hawks, Protective Specialized Services; Kayla Gardner, Social Service Programs; Beth Lowe, Executive Director's Office; Vicki Webb, Professional Development & Training; Jarae Dennis, Intake Services; Tracy Parker, Office Services; Theresa Harlan, Fiscal Services; and Nikita Jackson, Protective Services. Not pictured Kristin Thane, Intake Services; and Meghan Webster, Protective Services.

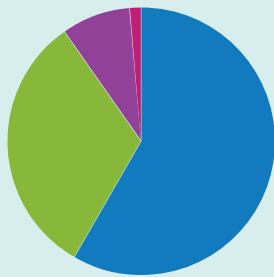


Holiday Cheer

Despite the lack of snow, Santa and Mrs. Claus were front-and-center at the Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru event for foster families and kinship caregivers. SCCS staff created a magical holiday for 353 children and 132 families at this event.

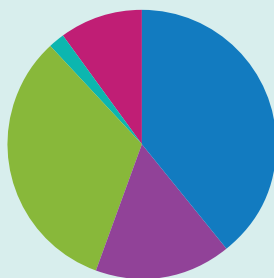


2021 Summary of Financial Statements



REVENUES

Operating Levy (Net)	\$ 39,401,614
Federal Funds	\$ 21,623,787
State Funds	\$ 5,616,464
Local & Grant Funds	\$ 772,608
Total Revenues	\$ 67,414,473



EXPENDITURES

Wages	\$ 22,552,619
Benefits	\$ 9,371,481
Placement	\$ 18,567,250
Other Child Related	\$ 1,194,011
Other Operational	\$ 5,588,460
Total Expenditures	\$ 57,273,821



Summit County

CHILDREN SERVICES

Building Families . . . Building Futures

Mission: SCCS is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of all children served, in partnership with families and the community.

DEI Values Statement:

At SCCS, we believe in creating a culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We will cultivate an environment that respects, celebrates and supports the differences of our employees and the people we serve.

For more on SCCS's Mission, Vision and Values, visit www.summitkids.org/About/Mission-Vision-Values



330.379.1990 | summitkids.org

Services & Programs

Intake Services

- Assessment/Investigations of Child Abuse & Neglect
- STAT (Serious Trauma Assessment Team) Unit

Intake Screening and Supports

- 24-Hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (330) 434-KIDS (5437)
- Evening Caseworker Unit
- Training and Transition Units

Protective Services

- Ongoing Case Management Services

Protective Specialized Services

- Medically Fragile Unit
- Substance Intervention Unit
- Permanency Planning and Adoption Units
- Family Preservation Units and Ohio Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma (START) staff

Placement Services

- Kinship Assessment Unit
- Independent Living Program
- Placement Unit
- Foster Home Support Unit
- 30 Days to Family®/ Family Search and Engagement

Other Services

- Family Meeting Unit
- Fatherhood Program
- Family Interaction Center
- Family Enrichment
- Community and In-Home Visitation
- Foster Recruitment Services
- Beds for Kids Program
- Succeed Program

Make a difference.

Make a call.

24-Hour Child

Abuse Hotline:

330-434-KIDS (5437)