

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



EMPOWERING CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Message from the CEO and COO

As we contemplate the events of 2022-2023 year, there is a lot to celebrate. Over the past 28 years, A Better Way (ABW) has intricately woven a tapestry of integrated support aimed at enhancing the well-being of vulnerable children and families in the Bay Area.

Our collaborative efforts encompass foster care, adoption, parent advocacy, mental health, and training programs, all working together to assist families in achieving enduring progress despite overwhelming challenges.

Our hallmark has become a steadfast dedication to partnership, teamwork, equity, and comprehensive care.

A few years ago, California embarked on a multi-year initiative known as California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), aiming to bring about substantial transformation in Medi-Cal for a more coordinated, person-centered, and equitable health system for all Californians. As CalAIM unfolded, A Better Way was already several steps ahead, cheering and steering these changes.

Members of the ABW Executive Leadership Team have actively participated in local and statewide stakeholder groups, contributing to shaping of the CalAIM rollout. Concurrently, we have adapted our services to fully leverage new and emerging CalAIM provisions.

Upon reflection of 2022-2023, two key observations emerge:

- 1. A surge of rapid, positive change is underway**
- 2. A Better Way stands at the forefront of this transformative wave**

With so many daunting challenges facing our world today, it is heartening to see such positive momentum in the realm of child and family services.

Thank you for joining us on this beautiful journey of hope!

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Channer'.

David Channer
Chief Executive Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Brown'.

Sharon Brown
Chief Operating Officer

Board of Directors

Bryan Saalfield, *Chair*

Marc Martos-Vila,
Vice Chair & Treasurer

David B. Vliet, *Secretary*
Emily Wu

James Orellana

Gay Searcy

Ariel Benjamin Evnine

Ahmad Asir

Jen Kokko

Executive Leadership

David Channer,
Chief Executive Officer

Sharon Brown,
Chief Operating Officer

Warner Graham,
Chief Program Officer

Anne Grascoeur,
Chief People Officer

On the Frontlines of Mental Health Services

In collaboration with Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, and Solano County, A Better Way, Inc. offers community-based mental health services using a multidisciplinary team approach.

Central to our partnership is the provision of therapeutic services and behavioral intervention for Medi-Cal eligible children, youth, and families. These individuals are either involved with or at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile/probation system.

Our services extend to clients ranging from birth to 21 years of age and are provided in homes, schools, and the wider community:

Specialized Areas:

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH): Delivered by specialized mental health clinicians, our ECMH services prioritize the well-being of young children. Our comprehensive approach supports children's mental health and simultaneously empowers caregivers with essential skills for enduring success. The goal is to transform the child's immediate environment, particularly their primary caregivers, into pillars of support and guidance.

Therapeutic Visitation Services (TVS): TVS is centered on strengthening families, particularly those navigating reunification after separation due to Child Protective Services' actions. Straddling the realms of Child Welfare and Behavioral Health, our approach leans on a strengths-based, trauma-informed model. This approach addresses the intricate challenges faced by such families, ensuring they have the necessary resources and support for reunification.

School Base Behavioral Health (SBBH): Our services reach students in five schools in Alameda County and twenty-six schools in Solano County. By collaborating closely with school staff and leadership, we identify and refer students with behavioral health needs for appropriate treatment. A critical aspect of our work is fostering understanding among families about their children's behavioral health and educational requirements. Moreover, we encourage active family participation in services and treatment.



Probation Services: Through our alliance with the Solano Department of Probation and the Youth Achievement Center (YAC), we strive to offer multi-dimensional treatment and services for youth under probation supervision. The design of these services aims to diminish the probability of these youths' continued engagement with the criminal justice system, promoting positive family and community ties.



Helping Parents Navigate Systems



Parent Advocacy Programs

A Better Way has extensive experience strengthening communities through three (3) programs designed to help parents navigate or avoid the Child Welfare System. In close partnership with Alameda County, A Better Way operates two peer-led programs: the Parent Engagement Program (PEP) and Another Road to Safety (ARS), and in Santa Cruz County: the Parent Partner Program (SCPPP).

The **Parent Engagement Program** hires parents who have successfully reunified with their children after placement in the Child Welfare System. We train them to serve as Parent Advocates – mentors for parents who are currently engaged with Child Welfare System. They also serve on numerous committees and work groups and provide training and consultation on county and state levels. For many of them, this is the first job they have ever had and a pathway to greater stability.

Another Road to Safety is a Differential Response program in which we work with parents and families who are at serious risk of entering the Child Welfare System. Utilizing the Strengthening Families framework, our teams offer an array of linkages, resources, and supports to help families develop and sustain the protective capacities associated with child well-being. This program also offers Parent Cafés – informal parent gatherings to build community, share food and learn about the Protective Factors that comprise the Strengthening Families model.



Santa Cruz County Parent Partner Program works to improve outcomes for families involved with the child welfare system. Families are referred when there is a determination that resources and support are needed to stabilize the family system & ensure child safety. Parent Partners are birth parents that have successfully navigated the Child Welfare system as clients and have returned to support other parents that are involved with that system. The SCPPP also provides eligible child welfare involved parents with time-limited education, peer mentorship, and support with the goal of increasing the number of families who successfully reunify, and reunify sooner, while decreasing subsequent changes in placement or custody.

Serving as a Beacon of Hope



Permanency Programs

A Better Way, Inc, is a licensed Foster Family Agency (FFA) dedicated to the recruitment and certification of resource families through the Resource Family Approval process (RFA). A primary objective of A Better Way is to reunify children with their birth families within the foster care system. While pursuing this goal, the agency remains committed to ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children in its care.



“My experience with A Better Way has been wonderful. The social workers have been nothing but considerate. The services that are provided to foster youth are exceedingly helpful.”

Primary Services

The agency offers non-treatment foster care services to children who are either entering or already a part of the child welfare system through the following services:



Foster Care: A Better Way’s FFA has played a pivotal role in providing foster care to countless children and families over the years with a central goal of reunification.



Adoption Services: If children cannot be reunified with their birth parents, A Better Way steps in to offer adoption services, ensuring that every child finds a loving home.



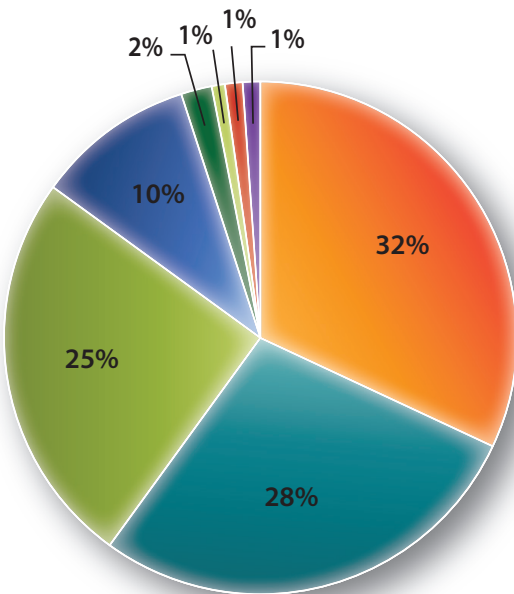
Intensive Service Foster Care (ISFC) Program: This program specifically caters to youth exhibiting challenging behavior or those with developmental needs, ensuring they receive the specialized care and attention they require.



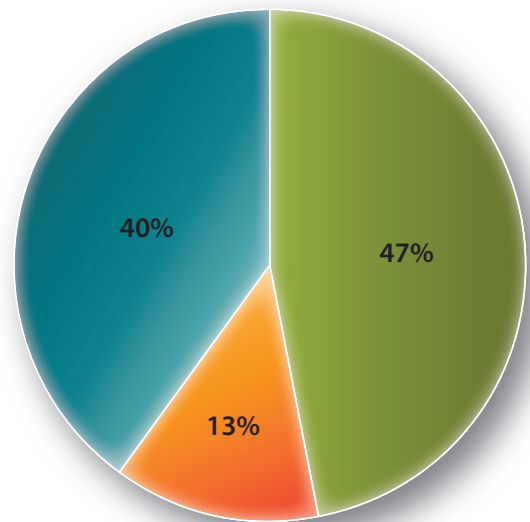
Transitional Housing Program Plus Foster Care (THP+FC): Licensed under A Better Way, the THP+FC program is tailored for non-minor dependent youth. It offers them a stable housing environment in remote settings, either as single dwellings or with roommates, facilitating a smoother transition to adulthood and independence.



WORKFORCE DIVERSITY



LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY



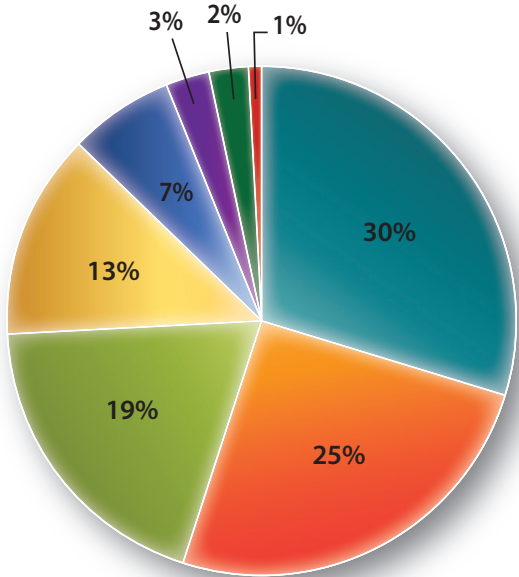
- Hispanic
- Black or African American
- Caucasian
- Asian
- Unknown
- Two or More Races
- I do not wish to self-identify
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

FY 2022-2023 Impact By Numbers



TRAINING DEPARTMENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS AVERAGE 4.9 OUT OF 5 ★

CLIENT DIVERSITY



Hispanic Black or African American Caucasian Asian Unknown Two or More Races
I do not wish to self-identify Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander American Indian or Alaska Native

Client Success Stories



My client was having a hard time in kindergarten. He was in the corner body slamming other kids and not following directions whatsoever. These behaviors appeared to be the result of early childhood neglect related to caregiver struggles such as mental health issues, economic instability, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

We provided family therapy and school-based clinical consultation, and **quickly began to see dramatic improvement**. His caregiver and teachers have learned new ways to respond to the child's feelings and

behaviors with compassion and containment. The child is now able to keep himself and his classmates safe when he becomes dysregulated. He expresses his feelings more calmly and has become more integrated into the classroom and playground culture.

He now knows that **he is loveable and that he is loved**. He sees his strengths reflected back to him every day. And he is thriving.

At the start of treatment, **the foster mom reported being very worried and wondering if the young person needed more intensive care**, perhaps residential care to help with the severity of their symptoms.

The mental health clinician from A Better Way started by building connections through various activities (skating, hiking, hot wings!). Before long, ABW's clinician and the client began the hard work of confronting the trauma and talking through the details of what happened.

They both stuck with this incredibly difficult work and continued to build trust as the client gradually told their story.

Recently, the client said, **"I can tell you anything!"** Foster mom has reported **that the youth is doing much better**: "She has been so responsible! I'm proud of how well they are doing at home and school."



“Being a part of the Better Way family has been a very enlightening part of my life. I wouldn't have done anything different if I had a choice.”

What Folks Are Saying...

“Great course, I enjoyed it and I enjoyed listening to the presenter. I was able to be engaged throughout and had a lot of take aways.”



“A Better Way professional training courses inspire me to sustain my joy in my work despite the challenges. Because of these trainings, I can continue to do the work that my heart desires.”

“I am increasingly able to help heal real trauma as a result of attending and participating in A Better Way training. Thank you!”

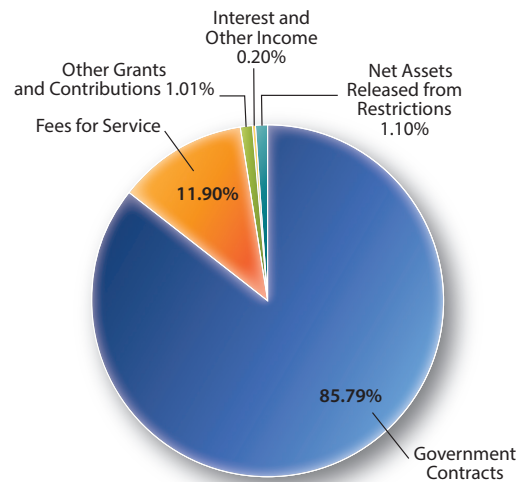


FY 2022-2023 Financial Highlights

REVENUE

Government Contracts	\$10,326,619
Fee for Service	\$1,432,755
Other Grants and Contributions	\$121,042
Interest and Other Income	\$24,116
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$132,544
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$12,037,076</u>

REVENUE: \$12,037,076

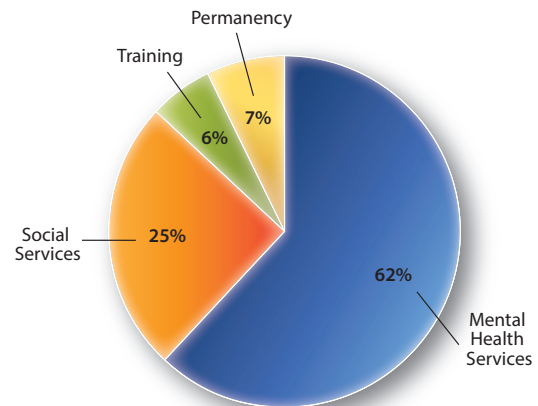


EXPENSES

Program Services

Mental Health	\$6,423,840
Social Services	\$2,617,843
Permanency	\$690,149
Training	\$607,219
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	<u>\$10,339,051</u>

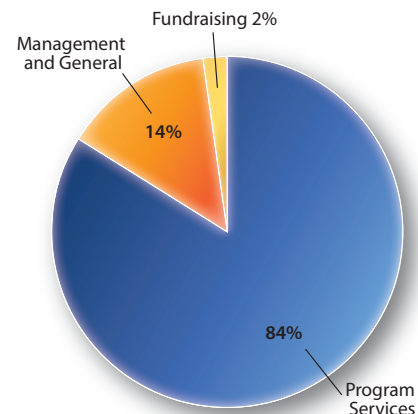
PROGRAM EXPENSES: \$10,339,051



Support Services

Management and General	\$1,774,285
Fundraising	\$233,234
TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES	<u>\$2,007,519</u>

EXPENSES BREAKDOWN: \$12,346,570



TOTAL EXPENSES **\$12,346,570**

Thank You For Your Support

We are grateful to the following partners, major funders, and donors for their support of A Better Way's programs and services in FY 2022 – 2023:

PARTNERSHIPS

Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
Alameda County Social Services Agency
Baker Tilly US, LLP
Bay Area Christian Church
CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion
California Alliance of Child & Family Services
Cascade
Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services
Extended Reach
Exym
Family Focused Treatment Association
Radical Bear
San Francisco County Foster Care Mental Health
San Francisco County Human Services Agency
Santa Cruz County Human Services Division
Solano County Behavioral Health
Solano County Probation
Together We Rise (Foster Love)

DONORS


Ahmad Asir
Alexis Angelidis
Alexis Ward
Anita Inman
Anne Grascoeur
Ariel Benjamin Ebnine
Bari Barkley
Bill & Margaret Searcy
Bryan Saalfeld
Cal Domingue
California Foundation for Stronger Communities
Carla Quint
Carol & Ron Hilley
Casey Family Programs
Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
Charles Keefe
Chu and Waters, LLP
Colin & Isabelle Trevorrow
Colleen Houlihan
Connie Satovich
Cooper Cogburn Productions
Danna Burch
David Channer
David Vliet
David Westervelt
Debbie Smith
Deloris Hurtado
Diane Brown Wade
Edgar Quiroz
Edward Nottingham
Eileen Curran
Emil McCulloch
Emily Wu
Everett Shockley
Frances Kaminer
Gabriella Gordon-Clark
Gay Searcy & Peter Langhoff
Gene Kim
Girl Scout Troop 31510
Gloria Flores-Garcia
Gregory Tschider III
Hilda Johnston
Insperity Services, L.P.
Inverleith Fruci
Jacob Hartinger
James Orellana
Jane Balg
Janet Falk
Janet Howley
Jean Tokarek
Jen Kokko
Jennifer Dolin
John Jenkins
John Steinfirsh
Juan Leandro
Judith Turiel
Kathryn Lybarger & Nina Ackerberg
Laura Ladd
Leah Kaizer
Lenda Townsend-Williams
Lewis & Monica Williamson
Lisa Radcliffe
Lynn Toveg
Mahin Azimi
Marc Martos-Vila
Mark Pasley
Melissa Lee
Meredith & Robert Cooke-Young
Michael Lewis & Tabitha Soren
Michael Bankert
Mona Mena
Nancy Spector
Nancy Swart
Netflix
Oak Foundation
Olive Shaughnessy
Patricia Adler
Patricia & Peter Sussman
Rachel Michaelsen
Richard & Janet Saalfeld
Richard Track
Robert Half
Sara Haber
Sarah & Bob Epperly
Shahnaz Mazandarani
Sharon Wright
Sheila Carr Therol
Sierra Health Foundation
Stuart Flashman
Sushma Agarwal
Tasha Henneman
Ted Feldsher
Wanda Bonneville
Winston Berger
Zachary Mutrux




To donate to A Better Way, scan this code with your cell phone.



 www.facebook.com/abetterway1996

 www.instagram.com/abetterwayinc1996/

 www.linkedin.com/company/a-better-way-inc-

www.abetterwayinc.net



Our Mission

A Better Way empowers children and families to develop the insights, life skills, and permanent relationships that promote their social, emotional, educational and economic well-being.

Organizational Values

Family Empowerment – We believe that each family has inherent strengths and the capability to create a positive and healthy environment that contributes to the wellbeing of a child. A Better Way strives to build on those strengths in a caring, non-judgmental, and supportive environment and to support the child in building lasting connections and stability in their lives.

Successful Outcomes – We believe that positive results for families come from the creative, efficient, and appropriate application of a wide variety of evidence-based practices. A Better Way staff will strive to use best practices in delivering services to the children and families we serve.

Cultural Humility – The staff of A Better Way embrace the cultural diversity of our region. We honor the beliefs, customs, heritage, values, and identities of all individuals, families, and communities. We practice ongoing self-reflection and constructive self-critique of own cultural beliefs & biases so that we may learn with and from the people we serve and work with.

Community Collaboration – We believe that we can only achieve excellence in service through honest cooperation and collaboration with the families themselves, with community partners, and with governmental agencies. A Better Way strives to create ownership and responsibility with all agency partners for successfully achieving permanence for children.

Professional Workforce – We believe that our families, funders, and the community deserve services delivered by a qualified, trained, and professional workforce. A Better Way employees and volunteers are committed to providing services in ways that demonstrate our integrity, respect, resourcefulness and passion.

“The therapist was phenomenal. I would not be where I am today, and my daughter’s mental health would not be where she is today if it was not for the therapist at A Better Way.”

– Client in the Parent Engagement Program whose daughter received psychotherapy through A Better Way