



AZ·ACES·CONSORTIUM



2023-2024 IMPACT REPORT

# Resilience Starts with Us: Building Strong Communities for Arizona's Youth





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Dear Friends,

First and foremost, thank you. Thank you for tapping into your empathy, compassion, and resilience and sharing it with the world. Without you, we wouldn't be able to continue the work we do! From community organizations, K-12 school professionals, and youth who have navigated another difficult year – we are so appreciative of what you are doing to support your community.

This year's annual report highlights the power of relationships in building resilience and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). By focusing on the critical role that adults—parents, educators, community leaders, and legal professionals—play in supporting children, we're creating a safety net of care that helps prevent ACEs and mitigates the impact of adversity. Through our programs, we've seen firsthand how these relationships foster stronger, healthier communities and pave the way for a brighter future for Arizona's youth.

Mitigating the impacts of ACEs and childhood adversity takes each one of us, working together, to create a resilient community full of supportive, caring adults and systems. We, at AZACEs, feel so lucky to be able to do this work each day and to reach so many people across all sectors.

As we have grown and expanded our services, we look forward to the future and the ability to serve more individuals and organizations in becoming trauma-informed and more resilient. It is because of you and with you that we are able to continue bringing awareness of the impacts of ACEs and childhood trauma and how to build resilience into our communities.

With Gratitude,



Angie Burleson

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

Executive Director  
AZ ACEs Consortium



# Our Mission

The Arizona ACEs Consortium (AZACEs) is a collaboration of more than two thousand individuals, state, county, and private organizations working together.

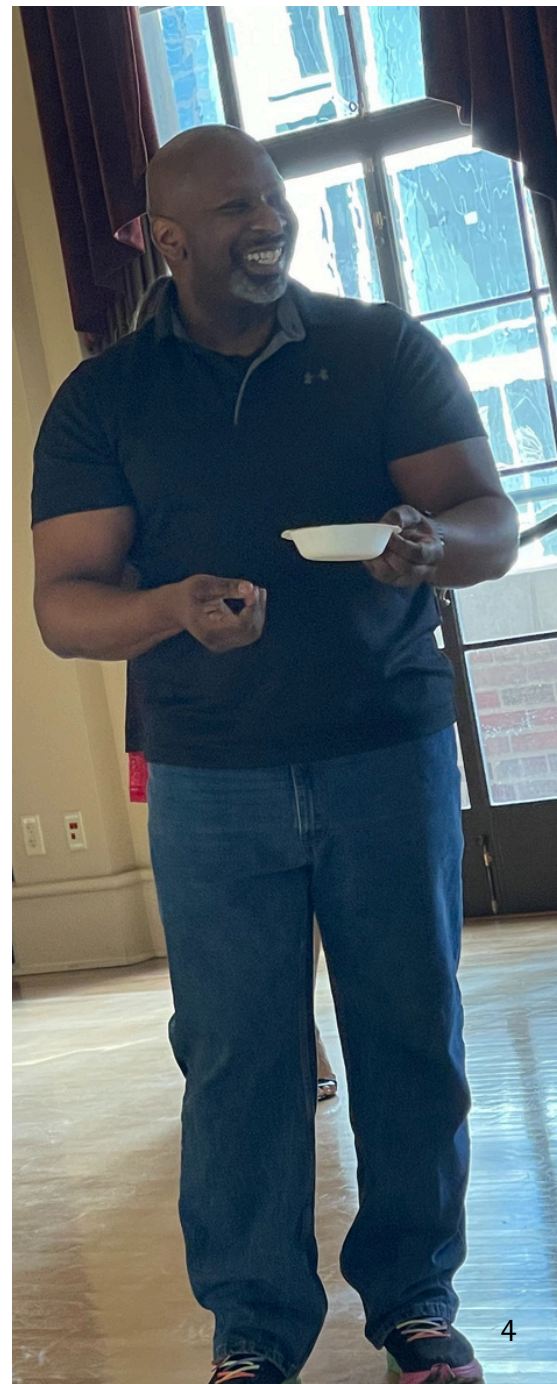
We are made up of professionals from all walks of life, united by a desire to help Arizona's children.

It's a big group, and we're committed to making sure that all families have the opportunity to raise healthy children from the start, so that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

# Our Reach

# 38,213

Students Impacted by  
AZACEs Programs







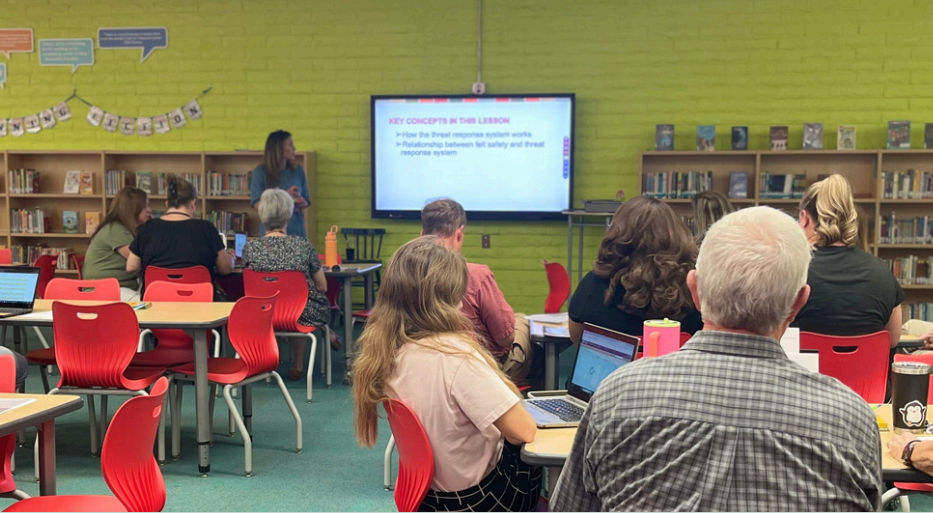
# Resilience Empowerment Project

At the AZACEs, we believe that building trauma-informed communities is essential for fostering resilience across our state.

Our signature program, the Resilience Empowerment Project (REP), lays the foundation for creating safe, supportive environments by providing the tools and strategies necessary to address trauma, toxic stress, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Through this program, we aim to equip schools, community organizations, professionals, and youth with the knowledge and skills needed to promote healing and resilience, creating a lasting impact on individuals and communities alike.





# 1,124

Educators Trained in  
57 Schools through  
REP Level 1 and 2

**RESILIENCE  
EMPOWERMENT  
PROJECT (REP)**

**FOR  
SCHOOLS**

We've designed the REP project for schools to empower educators, administrators, and students to understand and respond to trauma in a way that transforms school culture.

Over a three-year period, we work closely with school staff, providing them with the knowledge to create emotionally safe and supportive environments for students. By shifting the focus to relationship building and felt safety, **we help schools address the root causes of behavioral challenges and foster environments where students can thrive despite the adversities they face.**

Through ongoing training and the support of Resilience Ambassadors, we ensure that educators are equipped with the latest research and tools to implement trauma-informed practices in the classroom. Our goal is to help schools build a culture of resilience, where students feel safe, supported, and ready to succeed.



## A NEW APPROACH TO LEARNING: Fostering Emotional Well-being in Arizona's Schools

In a small charter high school in Avondale, Arizona, Principal Amanda Bachler and her team are proving that resilience can be built through relationships. Many of Amanda's 150 students come from challenging backgrounds, including homelessness, credit deficiencies, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. This school year, her school is now part of the REP movement, transforming the way educators respond to trauma.

*"We're not just managing behavior anymore," Amanda explains. "We're addressing the root causes by building stronger connections with our students and focusing on their emotional well-being."*

The Resilience Empowerment Project equips educators with the tools they need to recognize and respond to trauma. **Amanda's staff is halfway through the program, and the results are already making an impact.** Classroom referrals have decreased, and students are learning to self-regulate their emotions, using language like, "I wasn't regulated," to describe their feelings.

One of Amanda's key goals for the school year is to ensure her students are more future-focused—thinking about life beyond high school and preparing for college or career. *"This program addresses the basic needs of our students, helping them to look beyond the present and envision their future,"* Amanda shares. *"By addressing the whole child—academically, emotionally, and socially—we're creating a foundation that allows them to be ready for whatever path they choose after high school."*

This is a powerful example of AZACEs' work in action. By focusing on building resilience through relationships, the program is changing lives—not just for students, but for teachers and communities as well. *"This program aligns perfectly with our mission to meet students where they are and help them succeed,"* Amanda says.

AZACEs' work doesn't stop here. Across the state, we are helping educators, community leaders, and professionals create environments that prevent ACEs and foster emotional well-being. By building these support systems, we're laying the foundation for a healthier, more resilient Arizona—**one relationship at a time.**





**43**  
Community  
Organizations  
with 1,209  
participants trained

**RESILIENCE  
EMPOWERMENT  
PROJECT (REP)**

**FOR COMMUNITY +  
YOUTH-SERVING ORGS**

We know that trauma reaches far beyond the school environment, which is why REP is also tailored to meet the needs of community organizations and youth-serving professionals. Through a comprehensive six-session training, we help counselors, staff, and leaders understand how trauma impacts the brain and body, and we offer practical strategies to foster resilience and healing in those they serve.

Our program goes beyond surface-level training. **We teach professionals to create environments of physical and emotional safety, build strong, trusting relationships, and support individuals as they grow beyond their trauma.** By focusing on these key areas, we help community organizations move from managing behaviors to addressing the root causes of trauma, ultimately creating more compassionate and resilient communities across Arizona.

At AZACEs, we believe that together, we can create lasting change by building systems and environments that promote healing, resilience, and hope.



## FOSTERING COMPASSION IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM: Our Collaboration with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office

At the heart of our mission to expand trauma-informed practices across Arizona, AZACEs has developed a meaningful partnership with the Maricopa County Public Defender's Office, focused on fostering resilience within the justice system. This collaboration was spearheaded by Maricopa County Capital Defense Attorney, Raquel Centeno-Fequiere who recognized the need for attorneys and support staff to have an understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care as a way to support themselves and the clients they were working with

Contract AZACEs Trainer, Jessica Flowers helped develop and lead the 6-session trainings for more than 140 Maricopa County Public Defender's Office staff in 6 months. Flowers also presented to over 120 additional legal professionals from all over the state at the Arizona Public Defenders Conference in June.

*"For many attorneys, the training was the first time they learned about concepts like vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. They began to recognize that they were carrying the weight of the cases they handled, and this realization was life-changing," Jessica shares.*



Raquel Centeno-Fequiere and Jessica Flowers at the APDA Conference in June 2024



Jessica Flowers leading a training session for the Maricopa County Public Defender's Office

The response from the Maricopa County Public Defender's Office has been profound. Public Defenders now speak of a shift in perspective, viewing their work through a trauma-informed lens that enhances their approach to supporting youth and adults alike. This collaboration has not only fostered a culture of awareness and compassion but has also strengthened the relationship between AZACEs and the justice system.

After one session, the head of the office expressed, *"This is the most important training we've ever received. It's changing how we approach our work and care for ourselves."*

Through partnerships like this, AZACEs is working to weave trauma-responsive principles into sectors across the state, building a framework of support and understanding that uplifts entire communities.

This initiative with the Maricopa County Public Defender's Office is one of many steps toward a future where trauma-informed care is a standard of practice, creating a ripple effect of empathy and resilience throughout Arizona.



# 92

New ACEs  
Trainers Certified

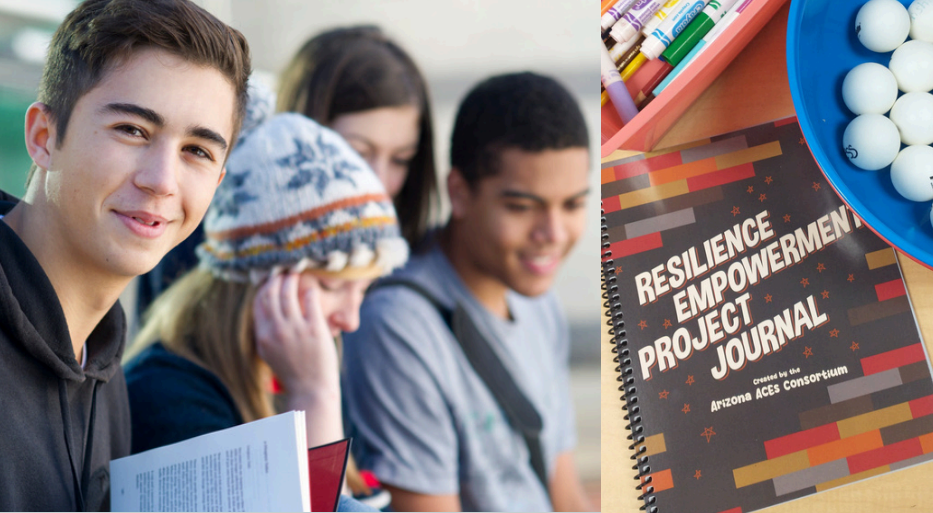
## ACEs Training of Trainers

AZACEs is proud to highlight our Certified ACEs Trainer Program, a cornerstone of our mission to build trauma-responsive communities across the state. This program provides professionals with the knowledge and tools to lead their communities in understanding and addressing the lasting impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma.

**Why is this program so critical?** The original ACEs study revealed the lasting impact of childhood trauma on adult health, but through trauma-informed care and positive childhood experiences, we can disrupt this cycle. Our Certified ACEs Trainers are trained to deliver engaging, interactive sessions on the science of ACEs, trauma, resilience, and post-traumatic growth, all while fostering healing-centered environments.

This program is designed to empower educators, healthcare providers, and community leaders with the skills to create trauma-informed spaces that prioritize safety, resilience, and long-term well-being. Through their work, our Certified ACEs Trainers play a vital role in building stronger, healthier communities throughout Arizona and beyond our state—helping to ensure that every individual has the support they need to thrive.





# 75

'Youth Stress and Resilience Trainings'  
Hosted for 1,339  
Participants

## Youth Stress & Resilience Trainings

As part of REP, AZACEs developed a 3-session training curriculum for youth ages 12–18 years. This curriculum, based on neuroscience, was created in collaboration with high school participants from Shadow Mountain High School.

The structure and activities within the curriculum were developed with a focus on the unique developmental stage of the teen brain by incorporating activities that encourage peer connection and self-expression. Instructors create an environment of felt safety so that youth participants can understand what stress is, how it affects them, and how to build their own resiliency plan:

- Part 1: Understanding Stress
- Part 2: Stress Strategies: Regulation and Relationships
- Part 3: The Neuroscience of Stress and My Recipe for Resilience

A full-color journal with writing and drawing prompts accompanies this interactive and dynamic training.

What is one thing you are taking away from this training that you feel like will affect your life?

*"I am taking away new self and co-regulation skills that I will use when I feel triggered." – Student*

# 10th Annual ACEs & Resilience Summit



482  
Summit Participants

## 10th Annual ACEs & Resilience Summit

The 10th Annual ACEs and Resilience Summit was an incredible milestone for AZACEs, uniting hundreds of passionate professionals from diverse sectors, including family services, government, healthcare, education, and law enforcement.

Under the inspiring theme "Renewing Connection," last year's virtual summit focused on strengthening relationships through a trauma-informed lens and creating trauma-responsive systems across Arizona.

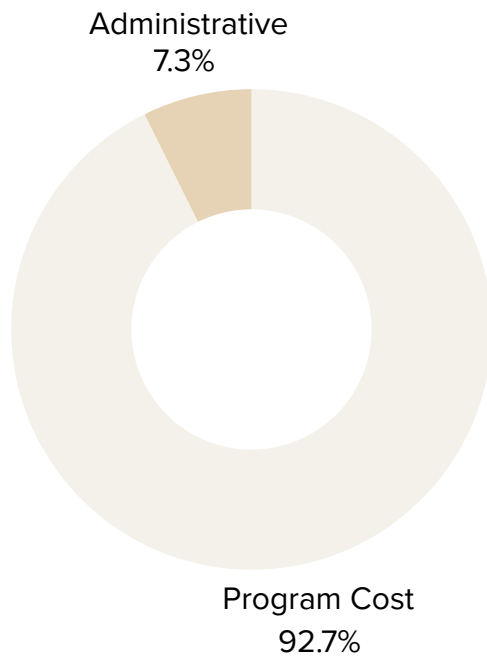
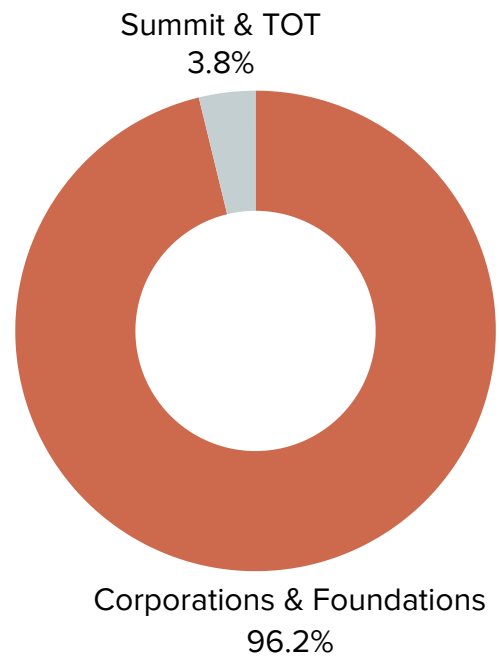
Over four enriching days, participants explored the latest strategies for building resilient, trauma-informed communities. The summit kicked off with a special Resilient Schools Conference and Educator Town Hall with 119 attendees, followed by a dedicated Medical Professional Day with 223 attendees. The main event featured 15 engaging workshops led by dynamic speakers who shared transformative approaches for addressing ACEs and childhood trauma, reimagining wellness, and healing intergenerational trauma.

We're proud to celebrate ten years of empowering professionals and building resilience together, one connection at a time.



# Revenue

CONTRIBUTIONS	
Individual Giving	\$0
Corporations & Foundations	\$1,115,227.92
Summit & TOT	\$44,016.69
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,159,244.61</b>



# Expenses

Fundraising Cost	\$0
Programs	\$1,074,192.05
Administrative Cost	\$85,052.56
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,159,244.61</b>

## Board of Directors

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Qualandra Hudgins

*Thank  
You!*





AZ·ACES·CONSORTIUM

The Arizona Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Consortium builds community resilience through authentic human engagement.



## GIVE TODAY

Your support extends beyond just funding—it fosters a healthier, more successful society.

By investing in our children and their environments, you're helping transform schools, empower community organizations, and support families in creating lasting change.

[azaces.org/donate](https://azaces.org/donate)

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